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PROWLING THROUGH PAPUA



*By the same author:*

TRY ANYTHING ONCE  
ROLLING DOWN THE LACHLAN  
ROAMING ROUND THE DARLING  
DIG

FREE AND EASY LAND  
SKY HIGH TO SHANGHAI  
TO THE ISLES OF SPICE  
ALL ABOARD FOR SINGAPORE  
D'AIR DEVIL

LAST OF THE EXPLORERS  
TOBRUK TO TURKEY

CHINESE MORRISON

*Privately Printed*





THE HON. LEONARD MURRAY, ADMINISTRATOR OF PAPUA

# PROWLING THROUGH PAPUA

With  
FRANK CLUNE

15  
Field Marshal Sir A. W. Well  
with all good wishes  
from the author  
Yours Sincerely  
Frank Clune.

on a prowling through India  
New Delhi. 12. 12. 43

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TO  
THE HON. H. LEONARD MURRAY, C.B.E.  
Administrator of Papua



## INTRODUCTION

WHEN I decided, in February 1940, to take a trip to Papua, all the Dismal Daniels of my acquaintances warned me that these torrid tropical territories are the most malaria-ridden regions of the world, and that I must be sure to dope myself up with quinine, quinine, quinine.

So, being contrary, I didn't.

I had invitations from Sir Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua, offering me full facilities to roam and rove over his demesne.

"Try Anything Once" is still my motto in the middle of my forties, as it was in my teens. Some people think that life really begins at forty. Since I turned that corner I have kept on gadding about, as much as ever I did when I was young and had no sense.

Papua was just a name on the map to me, although a very romantic name. I was like nearly all the other seven million white Australians who have accepted responsibility for the Land of the Fuzzy-tops without having any idea of what it is.

So, when I got the chance to go there, I went.

This book will tell you where I went, how I went, what I saw, what I did, and what I thought of it all.

FRANK CLUNE.

*Vaucluse, 1942.*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to acknowledge with gratitude the hospitality extended to me by the Government of Papua which, with the approval of the late Sir Hubert Murray, kindly placed at my disposal means of transport and other facilities for collecting the material of this book.

Particularly I wish to thank the Hon. W. H. Champion, Acting Administrator, for placing the launch *Panawina* at my disposal, and the management of Guinea Airways Limited for aerial transport.

Others who extended assistance and hospitality to me during my Papuan prowls are mentioned in the text.

I am very grateful to Mr J. R. Halligan of the Prime Minister's Department, Canberra, who paved the way for my visit and supplied me with much historical information; also to Miss Ida Leeson of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, for assistance—cartographic and graphic—and to Miss Joan Clark of the Royal Society for delving into dusty records; finally to my secretary, Miss Joy Carr, for assiduous deciphering of manuscripts, including my own illegible notes.

The new Administrator of Papua, the Hon. H. Leonard Murray, has obligingly and punctually answered many questions I have addressed to him, elucidating facts from his lengthy first-hand knowledge of the Territory's history.

F. C.

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## CHAPTER I

I BOOKED my passage by the Royal Mail Plane *Carmania*, of Carpenter's Airways, which flies once a week from Sydney to Rabaul—and back.

There was the usual rigmarole of weights, as Air Regulations permitted me only thirty pounds of luggage—not much for a thirteen weeks' tour. Like a jockey in the saddling-paddock, I went to scale in the kitchen, using the wife's spring balance to avoid being disqualified.

One tropical dinner jacket, 4 lb.; one black carnation for lapel of ditto, 1 oz.; trousers for ditto, 3 lb. 10 oz.; and so on and on and on. And then off and off and off—as I was overweight.

At the starting-post next morning at Kingsford Smith aerodrome, I was “weighed in” by the stipendiary stewards, then like a colt at the barrier, we're off.

The plane is a D.H. 86, with six passengers and two pilots. Dicky Mant, the Chief Pilot, aged thirty-two, was born in Sydney. He told me that, after five years' jackerooing in western New South Wales, he had a committee meeting with himself and decided that he wasn't getting anywhere. So, leaving the sheep and blowflies and droughts of Australia's sparse spaces, he learned the trade of flying, became a pilot, and spent five years instructing and joy-riding in country districts.

Dicky told me the story of an abo stockman at Brewarrina, who couldn't be cajoled into taking a ten-bob joy-ride: “When you're on the ground,” said Jacky, “and something happens, there you are. But, when you're up in the air and something happens, where are you?”

Dicky has been piloting for Carpenter's Airways ever since they started their New Guinea Air Service in 1934. The total distance from Sydney to Rabaul is 2430 air miles, done in two days' comfortable travel, with a night's camp at Townsville.



Peacefully we flew at an average height of 2000 feet along the north coast of New South Wales, through puff-ball clouds. Below us, green combers were breaking white with fury on scimitar-shaped sandy beaches. At eleven o'clock we reached Brisbane. At the aerodrome, I was greeted by Sister Butler, ex-A.I.F. nurse, who brought me a Saint Christopher medal as a gift from her brother, Rev. Father Butler, the chaplain of Boggo Road gaol. The priest and the nurse had heard my wireless talks and read my travel books, so they very kindly suggested that I should put myself under the aegis of St Christopher, the patron saint of travel.

It appears that the saint was born at Cratylus—an Armenian to whom all things were possible. He started life as a blacksmith, then became a soldier, serving under a Roman centurion, then a swordsman serving a king. Next he became possessed of the devil, and earned his living as a bandit, persecuting and harrying rich and poor, young and old, fair maidens and wives—a curse of the roads. One night this bold bad bushranger went to harry and harass a pious hermit, who dwelled near a ford, keeping a lamp alight to guide travellers across the stream. Instead of harassing the hermit, the Armenian was harassed when the hermit reproached him for his sins and converted him to the Way of the Cross. There he dwelt until the end of his days, often plunging into the icy torrents in winter-time to help travellers on their way. Once, it is said, he carried the infant Christ across that stream, thus earning the name of Christopher, the man who carried Christ on his back and also in his heart.

Aloft again with the Christopher talisman, we scudded along the Queensland coast, reaching Rockhampton at 2.30 p.m. Hell-black clouds gloom the sky and we are bucking a head-wind retarding us twenty miles an hour.

Throughout the afternoon we were flying above the beautiful Barrier Reef, then at sundown we glided in over the red hill of Townsville, and descended from the clouds to the clods in thirty seconds. Twelve hundred miles from Sydney. Once again I'm in the tropics, the land of intense green foliage, a vivid contrast with the dark green bush of temperate Sydney.

I sent my wife a telegram: "Crikey, it's hot!" And it was hot, too. Air travellers can range in one day from temperate to torrid

without noticing the difference until they step out of the plane. It's easy to keep cool up aloft, as most of the heat of the world is at the surface of the ground.

Townsville sweltered in the dusk as we drove to our hotel, for a cool-off under the shower. Over still cooler drinks I heard that the first casualty of the present war had occurred at Townsville. This tragic fatality happened on the hate-filled night of 3 September 1939, within half an hour of Mr Chamberlain's declaration of war against Germany.

Sentries had been posted at the oil depots of Townsville for several days previously; but, when Mr Chamberlain's solemn words came over the air, precautions against any surprise attack by the enemy were intensified. In the dead of night a sentry heard a suspicious noise. Peering in the gloom he saw a creeping figure approaching the oil-tanks, apparently determined on sabotage.

"Halt! Who goes there?" barked the sentry.

There was no reply, but the saboteur seemed to be retreating silently in the dark. Thrice the sentry challenged, but the intruder neither halted nor replied. Exercising his rights and duties in accordance with King's Rules and Regulations, the sentry took aim and fired. As the shot shattered the silence, the stentorian call of a sergeant-major was heard:

"Turn out the guard!"

In the barracks the sleepy soldiers hastily grabbed rifles and lanterns, donned their hats and set off at the double to search the precincts for the lurking foe. In the confusion and darkness it appeared that the intruder would escape, but the alert sentry had aimed well, and the corpse of the prowler was found, brain shattered by a bullet, the first casualty of World War the Second.

It was a billygoat.

Next morning at seven Dicky Mant boosted us aloft, and the Royal Mail headed north over the land of sugar with a panorama of cane-fields in the fertile valleys of the Herbert River, the Tully and the Johnstone, black rivers pouring seawards with white waterfalls gleaming against the green jungle.

These sugar-mill towns in the coastal valleys of North Queensland make me think of the contrast with Java, where forty million people dwell. Our cane valleys are more lightly tilled, as white labour has high standards, and sugar production is curbed to supply the markets of the south with sweetening. For years I

have advocated the development of the sugar-fields as a source of power alcohol. But it has taken a war to wake up the Government—too late—to the need of supplementing imported supplies of the fuel that drives the pistons of transport. Oil-politics beats sugar-politics in the secret schemes behind the scenes, while the motorists of Australia are restricted and rationed, and only half the sugar country is cultivated.

Below us now is the Hinchinbrook Channel near Cardwell, and in the offing from Tully River is Dunk Island, where Banfield the beachcomber dreamed and drifted in a home-made paradise. We descend at Cairns after an air-eye view of the Barron Falls plunging through a mighty chasm from the Atherton Tableland.

Mails are taken aboard while the petrol tanks and passengers are refilled with fuel; then we're aloft again, still going north along the shore, to pass Port Douglas and Mossman—the northern limit of sugar cultivation. Off shore is the Low Island, its white lighthouse a beacon and a blessing. It's a pity there wasn't a lighthouse there in June 1770, when Lieutenant Cook came sailing by in the barque *Endeavour*, as it was hereabouts that he barked the barque's barnacles on the coral reefs.

East of Cape Tribulation scattered white caps in the jade-green sea reveal the presence of lurking dangers. I wonder which one Cook struck?

At a quarter to ten we are grounded at Cooktown by the banks of the muddy Endeavour River. Our De Havilland plane is named the *Carmania*. She refuels where Cook's *Endeavour* was careened 170 years ago. But the *Carmania* has come 1432 miles from Sydney in thirty hours, while Cook's *Endeavour* was wafted by the winds in forty-two days from Botany Bay to Cooktown with a reef wreck thrown in.

I haven't described the air trip from Sydney to Cooktown in detail as descriptions of this flight along the coral-girt strand will be found in my previous books, *Free and Easy Land* and *All Aboard for Singapore*.

Morning-tea and petrol at Cooktown and we're all aboard for the 435-mile flight across the Coral Sea to Port Moresby in Papua. Off we go, straight over the historic Endeavour River, over mist-swathed Mount Cook, bearing away north-east from the coast at the lighthouse on the bold headland of Cape Flattery. I thought of Longfellow's poem:

The startled waves leap over it: the storm  
Smites it with all the scourges of the rain,  
And steadily against its solid form,  
Press the great shoulders of the hurricane.

The hurricanes do press in these parts too. It was only eighty miles north of Cape Flattery that Australia's worst maritime disaster occurred on 5 March 1899, when a hurricane struck the pearling fleet and wrecked fifty vessels with a loss of over three hundred lives.

Cape Flattery was given its name by Lieutenant Cook who, after leaving and naming the Endeavour River on 5 August 1770, made up his mind to get out of the region of corals which hemmed him in. On 10 August he entered the following in his diary: "We now thought we saw a clear opening before us, and hoped that we were once more out of danger; in this hope, however, we soon found ourselves disappointed and for that reason I called the headland Cape Flattery."

The *Carmania* steered high over the deceptive cape, and bore away across the sea, following Cook's track past Lizard Island to Cook's Passage, where at last he made his exit from the sharp-toothed jaws of the Barrier Reef, and floated, merry and free from care, on the ocean's open waters.

Lizard Island is high in the centre, running down to a dual spit with emerald shallows and sandy beaches. "As we saw no animals upon this place but lizards, I called it," says Cook, "Lizard Island."

Cook's Passage is only a few minutes' flying east of Lizard Island. It was a wonderful feat for the skipper of the *Endeavour* to steer his barque through the labyrinthine maze of nigger-head coral where the water breaks in foam: "Rocks and shoals," he remarks, "are always dangerous to the mariner, even where their situation has been ascertained; they are more dangerous in seas which have never before been navigated, and in this part of the globe they are more dangerous than any other; for here the enormous waves of the vast Southern Ocean break with inconceivable violence in a surf which no rocks or storms in the northern hemisphere can produce."

Men are moaners ever. Cook got out of the reef safely and then wished he was back inside its shelter when he couldn't find bottom to anchor for the night in the heaving ocean outside. From the *Carmania's* cabin, at 2000 feet I could plainly see the

exit where Cook so cautiously had to feel his way. The gap in the coral bulwarks is about half a mile wide, its edges plainly visible from the air by the break in colour of the water from deep blue, where it is safe, to light green where it is risky. One could see, too, thousands of nigger-head clumps of coral standing up from the white sandy bottom like the charred stumps of a submerged forest.

It's easy to see the formation of the reef from 2000 feet up in the air, but it's a different proposition from the crow's nest of a ship, where the breaking surf is the only warning to the wakeful mariner of the razor-sharp coral eager to gouge a hole in the bottom of his vessel.

The blue peaks of Australia's mainland sank below the horizon as the four-engined *Carmania* roared above the deep blue sea, headed for Papua.

Once again I have escaped from hot humid earth, the ugly architecture of streets of tenements, the peremptory tinkle of telephones, the perfumes of petrol on asphalted streets, the clang, clatter and clump of trams, the chaffering of the market-place, and the boredom of civilized life. I'm aloft in a sapphire sky over the Coral Sea, part of that restless ocean, which surges in its tides from pole to pole and continent to continent, washing the faces of all lands.

A strange thing the ocean. Poets have raved over it and at it, and philosophers have ruminated on its mysteries. It has provided the themes for hymns and songs, epics and tragedies, comedies and romances; it has earned paeans of praise and hymns of hate. Kalgoorlies, Johannesburgs, and Broken Hills, never to be disturbed by pick of prospector or pneumatic drill, lurk in ocean's depths. It has swallowed hundreds of millions of men and tens of thousands of ships, in peace and in war, throughout humanity's inhuman history.

Think too of the surging tides following the pale moon senselessly round and round, like a dog on an invisible chain, traveling with relentless and uncontrollable power. Inventors have dreamed of harnessing that power. Company promoters have exploited the credulity of avaricious investors. All in vain. Old Ocean keeps on rolling along, unharnessed and untamed, its dynamic force uselessly dashing against the Rock of Ages, and the chalk cliffs of Dover, and the sandstone cliffs of Sydney.

Slowly the ocean is swallowing the land. Every year hundreds

of millions of tons of soil are washed by the rivers into the salty deep. Some day, pessimists aver, there will be no more land—except what is under water.

The moon, the sun and the ocean are themes for poets and inspirations for romance. Many a promise—and breach of promise—has occurred under the influence of a pale moon on a silvery sea. Like Love itself the ocean is peaceful; but alas, like Love, it is capable of tempests and turgidness, and romance has its ups and downs, like the storm-tossed mariner, or the native fisherman in his catamaran.

Flying over the ocean, I think of the white-winged clippers bowling along with the trade-winds and of the galleons of De Quiros and Torres who nearly discovered Australia in these waters below, which to-day are peaceful, with only a groundswell, but to-morrow may be lashed by a hurricane into rearing white horses.

My random ocean thoughts are interrupted by land in sight on the northern horizon—Papua, land of the dusky fuzzy-tops!

## CHAPTER II

NINETEEN hundred air miles from Sydney, and the *Carmania* is winging her way above the sea towards the blue mountainous mass of Papua's southern shores. Rapidly we make our landfall, and the pilot points to the conical bulk of Mount Victoria, 12,452 feet high, forty miles inland from Port Moresby, our destination.

The peaks of the Central Range of New Guinea are swathed in monsoonal mists which swirl like veils on a lovely bride. In the foreground, the vivid green of the jungle is like a carpet at the foot of the range, edged on the coast with a strip of golden sand, then the vivid blue of the ocean, mottled with light-green patches of coral reefs, extending as far as the eye can see, east and west, crested with a line of snowy surf. The entrance to the harbour is marked by a deep patch of blue water, where the coral insects have obligingly left a wide passage for ships to enter the port. Near by, the rusty masts of a small steamer show where it made its wreckfall.

From the air, Port Moresby looked like a Papuan paradise. It was the rainy season, and the jungles and palms were brilliantly green under the vertical sun which bathed the scene in golden light. At 2.10 p.m., we were aground on the narrow palm-fringed aerodrome, one mile from Moresby town, where I was met by happy Tom Lowney, a representative of the Papuan Government. A drive through avenues of coco-nut palms brought me to the brand-new Moresby Hotel, glistening in its cream paint.

All Papua was in mourning for the death, only two days previously, of Lieutenant-Governor Sir Hubert Murray, who had invited me to make the tour. The scythe of the Grim Reaper had deprived me of the honour of meeting this great man, the most famous colonial governor in the British Empire. I had looked forward to the privilege of asking him many questions about his long period of stewardship as "Number One Poppa" of Papua, as the natives affectionately called him.

But I only saw his grave, the newly-turned earth strewed with wreaths not yet withered, tributes of love and sorrow from Christians and pagans, white and black, in the Territory which was his home.

Sir John Hubert Plunkett Murray, K.C.M.G., was born at Sydney on 29 December 1861, and died at Samarai, Papua, on 27 February 1940, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.

His grandfather, Terence Murray, an Irishman, was paymaster of the 48th Regiment, the Northhamptonshires, who garrisoned Australia from 1817 to 1824. Paymaster Terence took a liking to this country, resigned his commission and returned to Australia in 1827 on the ship *Elizabeth*, bringing with him his eighteen-year-old son, Terence Aubrey, born at Limerick.

The two Terries took up land at Lake George, near Canberra. Terence the younger later squatted at Jingellic in the Yarrangobilly district. He entered politics in 1843, became Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in 1860, and President of the Legislative Council in 1862.

He was knighted in 1869 and died in 1873—leaving three sons—Aubrey, Hubert, and Gilbert.

Hubert and Gilbert went to Oxford as students. Gilbert is still there, as Regius Professor of Greek—world famous as translator of classical texts and as an eloquent advocate of the League of Nations.

Hubert Murray, who stood six feet three inches without his socks, was a champion swordsman and boxer as well as scholar at Oxford. When he returned to Australia, he was appointed Crown Prosecutor of New South Wales and an Acting-Judge. In 1898 he served in the South African War, as officer commanding the New South Wales Irish Rifles.

Returning, decorated for valour, Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, aged forty-three, with a brilliant career behind him, astonished all his acquaintances by accepting the position of Chief Judicial Officer of the Territory of Papua, which at that time had a European population of only 642 persons.

But Hubert had a vision. He was not so much interested in the 642 whites, as in the uncounted tens of thousands of fuzzy-top natives—bedevilled by sorcery and devoted to cannibalism—who dwelled along the coasts and rivers, and in the unexplored hinterland of Bird-of-Paradise Land.



Rough justice was dispensed to these Stone Age people by a staff of seven Resident Magistrates, and ten Assistant Resident Magistrates, representing the might, majesty and legal potency of the British Empire. As Chief Judicial Officer, Murray was responsible for the supervision of the law and morals of white and black alike.

He commenced his duties on 16 September 1904, at a salary of £1000 a year, being second only in importance and salary to the Administrator, Captain F. R. Barton, who was civil-listed at £1250 per annum.

At that time the Territory was officially named "British New Guinea". A great change occurred on 1 September 1906, when Administrator Barton assembled the residents, and uttered a Proclamation.

"This day," he declared, "is a very important one in the annals of British New Guinea—henceforth to be styled Papua."

His Excellency then addressed the native population, saying: "*Umui basio hoa mai lalo haguhi hari hereva dainai!*" which means "You need not be alarmed by the change which is made to-day".

The Administrator then called on all throats to give three cheers for the King, followed by three cheers for the Commonwealth of Australia.

Hip-ip-ip hooray! Hip-ip-ip hooray! Hip-ip-ip hooray!

On 8 April 1907, Administrator Barton went on twelve months' leave of absence, and His Honour, Judge J. H. P. Murray, took the oath of office as Acting-Administrator. Twelve months went by and Administrator Barton was still absent, as he resigned on 8 April 1908, leaving affairs in the capable hands of his deputy, Judge Murray.

A Gazette Extraordinary was issued in Port Moresby, on 18 January 1909, containing a copy of a commission from the Governor-General of Australia "appointing John Hubert Plunkett Murray, Esq., to be Lieutenant-Governor of the Territory".

And he remained Lieutenant-Governor till the day of his death, 27 February 1940. For thirty-three years Hubert Murray uninterruptedly controlled the destiny of Papua. In no other part of the British Empire has one man held gubernatorial sway for such a lengthy period. Many people have marvelled that a man of such outstanding intellectual ability and social prestige should have buried himself in a remote malarial miasma, when the

highest offices of the Crown in Australia would have been open to him.

Sir Hubert Murray was an idealist, but he was certainly not an armchair dreamer. His ideal was "not only to develop the resources of the Territory, but also to preserve the Papuan people, and raise them to the highest civilization of which they are capable". Papua for the Papuans, was his motto, an amazing ideal, considering that in every other black country in the world white men were ruthlessly exploiting and exterminating native peoples.

Some have called Hubert Murray a sentimentalist; some have called him a noble humanitarian; some have called him a damned nuisance, interfering with legitimate business development; but none can deny that he devoted great strength of mind and body to his chosen task.

In his native land, Australia, he had seen the aboriginal people slowly exterminated, their lands stolen from them, their women demoralized, their tribes dispersed by disease, their miserable remnants segregated in reserves and concentration camps. This reproach to the fair name of "White Australia" rankled in his soul, and he determined to prevent a repetition of the tragedy in Papua. "We wish Australia," he wrote, "to have the credit of showing how the civilization of the twentieth century can be introduced among people of the Stone Age not only without injury to them, but to their lasting benefit."

It was a colossal undertaking to civilize the sorcerers of the riparian deltas, who had murdered many a missionary and trader—people addicted to black magic, and educated in a cannibal curriculum. To bring under control 300,000 savages with only a few dozen white officials at his disposal, and to pacify and patrol an area of 90,000 square miles of jungle swamps, and unexplored, precipitous mountain ranges, was the giant task of this intellectual and physical giant.

His deeds of daring and endurance are legendary. Without publicity or swank he roamed his jungle demesnes, bitten by mosquitoes, fevered with malaria, soused in quinine, parched with heat, drenched with monsoonal rain, storm-tossed as he crossed the seas, to visit islands and outposts. Until he was well over seventy years of age, the Lieutenant-Governor energetically led cross-country marches which tired out many members of his party who were years younger than himself.

His faithful companion and private secretary for thirty years was another member of the Murray clan—his nephew, Leonard Murray, son of Sir Hubert's elder brother, Aubrey. Leonard was closely associated with Sir Hubert on all his patrols by sea and land, and in the shaping of every facet of the Murray policy.

Sir Hubert died in harness; actually while on an official visit of inspection in the Trobriand Islands. He passed away peacefully in his sleep at Samarai, and the body was brought by flying boat to Port Moresby for burial. Every citizen of Port Moresby, white and black, was waiting to join the procession, to pay their last respects to the Big Chief.

A journalist of the *Papuan Courier* described the scene of the funeral in simple yet powerful words: "He lies buried in a quiet place, surrounded by the hills which he knew so well. The grave is under a big frangipanni, with two tall gum-trees standing guard. And just at sunset he was buried, the Last Post was sounded, the grave, lonely as all graves must be, was filled as the short twilight was fading, and we left him there in the dark."

The simplicity of this tribute makes it a gem of funeral eloquence appropriate to the passing of a great-hearted yet simple-natured man.

The atmosphere of mourning and deep-felt grief pervaded Port Moresby when I arrived. The white men of the Port were full of reminiscences of Sir Hubert's long reign, and cables of condolence from all parts of the world reached the Acting-Administrator, the Hon. H. W. Champion, and the dead man's nephew, the Hon. H. Leonard Murray.

What the natives of Papua thought will never be known. They grieved in silence, seemingly stunned with incredulity at the death of one whom they had deemed immortal.

"The Man Who Tamed Papua" had passed, but his work goes marching on.

## CHAPTER III

ONLY thirty-six hours from Sydney, and I was in a different world—a world of palms, thatched houses, coco-nuts, and fuzzy-top natives, bare-legged and bare-chested, both male and female, clad only in bright-coloured lap-laps, or lava-lavas of calico—called ramis—about the size of a Scotchman's kilt, without the pleats.

And by the way, don't call the place *Pap-ewer*. The Moresby-ites insist that its correct name is *Pah-poo-er*, with a long "pah" and "pooer" with a sneer.

Another thing: Please don't be a lowbrow and call the natives of Papua, *kanakas*. That's an awfully vulgar word, used by beachcombers, Bully Hayeses, roughs and riff-raff of the South Seas.

In Papua, where the fuzzy-tops are mollycod-liver oiled, you are politely requested to call them just "natives", or some similar dignified term.

In the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, however, just across the border, you can call them *kanakas*, or *coons*, or *niggers*, or anything you like, with or without adjectival prefixes.

The Territory of Papua, 90,000 square miles in area, is about the same size as the state of Victoria. Its soil is fertile, its rainfall tremendous, its climate completely tropical, its landscape jungle-swathed, rising from steamy coastal swamps and river deltas to a giant backbone of mountains, towering to 12,000 feet.

The term Papua is applied only to the south-east quarter of the large island of New Guinea. It has been an Australian dependency, or possession, for fifty-seven years. The population to-day consists of about 300,000 natives and 1600 whites. Its affairs are administered by a Lieutenant-Governor and Council, with a staff of civil servants, appointed by and responsible to the Minister in Charge of Territories, at Canberra.

There is no "democracy" about Papua. It is governed as a benevolent dictatorship. Even its white citizens, or inmates, have no vote, either for their own government or for the Australian Parliament. They have no direct representation or voice at Canberra. And they say they have no means of getting their grievances brought to the notice of the Australian people.

Port Moresby, the one and only town of any real size in Papua, has a white population of 691 persons, including only 232 females. There's a great chance here for reputable spinsters in search of a spouse, as the men outnumber the women two to one. In addition to the fixed population, there is a floating population of pearlers, prospectors, and patrol officers—who float and fly to the Port for a quick look at its two pubs and several stores.

Nestling in a cup-like bay, fringed by coral strands and coconut palms, with forested mountains towering behind it to cloud-land, its tin-roofed architecture makes it look like many another Australian coastal small town. The main difference, noticeable when you descend from the clouds, is that the streets are decorated by dozens of fuzzy-top natives in bright ramis.

These people, who work about the town as house-boys or house-girls, under strict government supervision, or as fishers in the Port, live in the native village of Hanuabada, one mile from the white man's town. Their language is Motu, which officials and other whites have to learn, as Sir Hubert didn't like the natives being vulgarized by pidgin-English.

I didn't count the number of mosquitoes—gnat-gnats to you—in Port Moresby, but a guess of a few billions wouldn't be far wrong. They operate, in the fashion of their tribe, mainly after nightfall, and you keep them off with a bed-net. The female *Anopheles* mosquito is the dangerous one, the malaria-carrier; and, thanks to her, Port Moresby has acquired a reputation as an unhealthy place to live in.

It's not unhealthy. Modern science is changing the discomforts of tropical life into pleasures. Aeroplanes give speedy transport, radio removes the feeling of isolation, refrigerators give ice to cool the fevered brow and the tepid whisky; and, above all, inoculation and modern medical treatment ward off the horrors of tropical diseases. Very probably, Papua is on the verge of a big development—that is, if Australians wake up, take a tumble, and change the dog-in-the-manger, do-nothing policy, before too late. . . .

On the afternoon of my arrival I called on the Acting-Administrator, Hon. H. W. Champion, a veteran of the Papuan Civil Service, with thirty-eight years' experience in the Territory. He welcomed me cordially and explained that Sir Hubert Murray had made complete arrangements for me to take a trip by the government launch to the Fly River and the Kikori delta.

As the launch would not be ready to leave for three days, Mr Champion suggested that I should put in the intervening time visiting rubber plantations in the northern division of Papua, beyond the Owen Stanley Range. I bounced with pleasure at this rubbery idea.

On the morrow I was piloted by Tommy O'Dea, in his four-engined Junkers, on a flight over the mountains to the rubber country. It is thirty minutes by air, or seven days' walkabout. Take your pick. The plane takes out stores to the plantations, and brings in rubber to the Port. Pilot O'Dea is one of the ace pilots of Guinea Airways, with over 10,000 hours' flying experience.

Guinea Airways is the largest freight-carrying air company in the world. Everything goes by air from the coast to the inland plateaux, as there are no railways and few roads through the jungles. Instead, every plantation has its own landing-ground, and huge modern planes hop and buzz from valley to valley over the tree-tops, like giant silver birds of paradise. Air transport has opened up the New Guinea and Papuan hinterland, where on the plateaux are millions of acres of fertile ground, with abundant rainfall and moderate climate, suitable for development by white settlers, now that the transport problem is solved.

Leaving Port Moresby, we soared east along the coast for twenty miles, then turned north towards a gap in the Owen Stanley Range. Below was the Laloki River, and Papua's only road, twenty-one miles short, which comes to a sudden stop at Rona Falls. As the natives say, it "beggars-up, dead-stop-finish".

Despite Sir Hubert Murray's great work for native welfare during his thirty-three years of administration, I heard much criticism of his failure to develop Papua commercially. It is not fair to blame Sir Hubert, as he only carried out the policy, laid down by the Commonwealth Government in 1906, of keeping Papua as a primitive paradise for its dusky inhabitants, and not allowing them to compete with their black labour against the White Australia Policy.

Papua is a primitive paradise all right. There is no income tax—and no votes. Partly because of the retarded development of the Territory, the revenue from customs tax fails to meet expenditure, and the Commonwealth coughs-up a floating subsidy of about £40,000 annually—a gift by the taxpayers down south for the benefit of their black foundling. This has been the position for many years, but a change is possibly near. Papua may be on the verge of a big development, particularly as a producer of rubber and, perhaps, flow-oil—two products essential for Australia's industrial advancement in this motorized age.

Pilot O'Dea wiggled the joystick, and the tachometer trembled as we climbed over the plateaux, where below could be seen the Koitaki rubber plantation—an oblong patch of clearing in the dense green jungle. The Owen Stanley Range is a decent sort of bunker to get over, as we climbed 12,000 feet to hurdle it. To the west was Mount Victoria—its nose poking through the clouds like the black snout of a pup. Its top is sawn-off square, and a razor ridge descends from it, south-west towards the sea.

Now we were above the northern watershed of Papua, in the Yodda River valley. Below us, the sun gleamed white on waterfalls, where the rivers cascaded over cliffs to deep gorges. Among the trees were clearings, where native villages nestled. Far to the east, I glimpsed the blue ocean, peering up at us through rifts in the sunny clouds.

The first explorer to reach the summit of the Owen Stanley Range was Administrator Sir William MacGregor, who arrived in Papua on 4 September 1888. He wasted no time in probing his demesne. On 20 April 1889 he left Port Moresby by whaleboat for the mouth of the Vanapa River, which empties into Redscar Bay, twenty miles west of Port Moresby.

MacGregor and his men whaleboated up the Vanapa, rowing, poling, pulling and dragging their craft till they were thirty-five miles upstream a week later. This was the limit of boat navigation, so a base camp was made, from which the Administrator explored the foothills of the Great Range.

On 17 May, His Excellency, with a party of forty-two persons, including thirty-seven native carriers and constables, started to plod uphill. Twelve days later they were on the crest of Mount Musgrave, 8000 feet above sea-level, but could see no spur

reaching to the summit of their ambition—Mount Victoria—so they clambered downhill and then updale to Mount Knutsford, 11,100 feet high, arriving there on 6 June. Says MacGregor: "Here we were clear above the great masses of snow-white clouds. The upper surface of this vast ocean-like cloudy expanse was dazzling in its whiteness. The great cumuli lay apparently perfectly still, like an Arctic world of frozen snow. The tops of the higher mountains projected above this sea of cloud, clear, bold and dry."

MacGregor the bold determined to reach the highest of these peaks, and pressed on in the upper altitudes, far above the clouds, till, on 11 June: "I reached the top of the north-west peak of Mount Victoria," and camped there two nights at an altitude of 12,452 feet, "amidst the deep oppressive silence that reigned on this great lone mountain." There MacGregor stood proudly, monarch of all he surveyed—except that the clouds prevented him from surveying it.

Triumphantly the Highlandman returned to the lowlands of Port Moresby, via the Vanapa valley, after burying a powder-flask on the top of the nor'-east peak, containing a paper with the date of the ascent, 11 June 1889.

It took Billy MacGregor fifty-two days to clamber from Port Moresby to the summit of the range, but Tommy O'Dea in his Junkers has whizzed me up and over the top in fifteen minutes; and now the engines are shut off as we glide like a gourd pigeon towards our destination on the northern slopes.

We grounded at Kokoda, a government rubber plantation, where experiments for many years have proved beyond doubt that Papua is ideally suitable for producing fine Para rubber. Each year, as the trees grow in girth, the yield of rubber increases. Last year Papua exported 1290 tons of rubber, valued at £115,000. That is only a fraction of Australia's requirements, as the Commonwealth imports £2,000,000 worth annually. If we want to keep our kangaroo pounds in this country, we'll have to depend more and more on Papua for our rubber supply. The Territory should be able to provide the whole of Australia's requirements in years to come, when more plantations are developed. Since the war, the price of rubber has bounced up from 7d. to 15d. a pound, so the Papuan rubber-planters hope for an elastic future.

Experiments on the government plantations have produced the



right type of tree to give a bountiful yield. In fact, some rubber-planters claim that Papuan trees give a twenty-five per cent greater yield than is obtained in Malaya. Official estimates, in the Government's 1938 *Handbook of Papua*, say that it costs about £30 to clear, plant, and maintain an acre of rubber-trees until the fifth year, when they are ready for milking. After that, the yield increases, and the trees live to a great age—sixty to eighty years, at least.

The *Handbook* adds that the average yield of rubber per acre gives a profit of twenty-seven per cent on capital invested, when the price is 7½d. per lb. As the price has now risen to 15d. you can see the reason for the rubbery optimism.

At Kokoda plantation I met Mr S. H. Chance, Resident Magistrate, Gold Warden, and Plantation Manager. Then I flew in the Junkers over into the next valley, where I stayed for three days as the well-fed guest of Mr and Mrs Kingsley and their family at Yodda plantation. Here is a gold-mine, as a sideshow to the rubber-show. The mine employs 162 natives, bossed by two Europeans.

Yodda River is a tributary of the Mambare, which rises in Mount Victoria, and flows for seventy wriggling miles northwards to debouch in Mambare Bay. This river has a history of blood and gold. In 1895 G. E. Clark led a prospecting party of six white men by schooner to the Mambare River. They started upstream by whaleboat on 2 July, and all went well for the first nine days as they merrily rowed along, establishing friendly relations with the villagers. On 12 July they were forty-five miles from the coast, and reached a ravine through which the flood poured in turbulence. Canoe loads of savages, following the whaleboat, assisted in towing Clark up the ravine, while his mates trudged along the shore.

Suddenly the savages cut the tow-line and, as Clark drifted away from his mates downstream, he was surrounded by a fleet of canoes. Yells and shouts as the wild men attacked with showers of spears. Clark, firing his revolver, jumped overboard and clung to the gunwale. But he was stunned by a heavy blow from a paddle and his body sank, pierced by many spears.

The savages looted the boat and vamoosed. Clark's mates, after vainly searching for his corpse, salvaged the boat and drifted downstream, vowing vengeance. Twenty miles from the coast they met a cutter coming upstream, with the *Ivanhoe* pros-

pecting party of seven white men. The parties combined and, twelve strong, returned upstream to the scene of Clark's murder. They dealt out retribution, burning seven native houses "and took the law into their own hands, inflicting much loss and damage on certain natives".

The avengers proceeded farther up-river to a point sixty miles from the coast, and here a main camp was formed, named "Clark's Fort". This was left in charge of digger Clunas, while the other miners prospected the foothills of the range for gold. They met with "encouraging prospects", and the whole party returned to the coast for stores.

Soon afterwards the government steamer, *Merrie England*, with His Excellency Sir William MacGregor aboard, arrived at the mouth of the Mambare on an inspection cruise. Hearing of the murder of Clark, Sir William decided to go up-river himself and visit the scene of the crime. With a guard of native constables the Governor reached the rapids where Clark died, then went on to Clark's Fort. For seven days MacGregor traversed the hinterland, finding many gutta-percha trees, but not much gold. He returned to Clark's Fort, just in time to witness a brawl between his constabulary and the riparian savages.

Says Sir William: "The natives resisted to the utmost, and about half a dozen of them were killed, but six prisoners remained in the hands of the constabulary, and the natives were soon vanquished in a thorough and complete manner."

So Clark was thoroughly and completely avenged.

William the Conqueror returned down-river with his prisoners, after arranging to establish a government station on the Mambare, with police protection to pacify the district and protect miners.

The Orakaiva savages wailed as they saw the six prisoners taken away in the swift-gliding boat, and their wives yowled, throwing themselves on the ground "with a slap on the wet red bare clay, that could be distinctly heard a hundred yards away". The weeping widows thought that their captive husbands would form a succulent *bonne bouche* for the Governor's table. But MacGregor's plan was to tame and teach the hostages, enrol them in the constabulary and return them to their villages as the representatives of law and order.

In the following year, Explorer-Governor MacGregor conceived the ambitious plan of a coast-to-coast march across the island. On 6 August 1896 he started up the Mambare with a

steam launch, and reached the government station at the junction of Tamata Creek the following day. On 11 August he started a march southward, crossing two creeks which he named the Clunas and Simpson after mining pioneers. Three days later he reached Simpson's store, an outpost built by the prospectors, and paid a literary tribute to the courage of the miners in hacking a road through the jungle. Says he: "The cutting of this path is the most important work ever performed by any private person or party in this country."

But soon the Governor got beyond all tracks as he traversed the goldfields where a small band of miners had done "fairly well". Then, passing the junction of the Mambare and Yodda rivers, he started to ascend the Owen Stanley Range to the west of Mount Victoria.

Climbing among evergreen oaks, betel palms, myrtles and the "circus-like playgrounds of the bower bird", the Governor meandered midst the rhododendrons, mosses and daisies to reach the top of Mount Scratchley, 12,850 feet, on 12 September—"accompanied by thunder and fog". Then, slithering down the other side of the Divide, the wandering Scotsman reached his old track at Mount Victoria on 20 September, and percolated to the south coast of Papua via the Vanapa River where, at Red-scar Bay, the *Merrie England* awaited him, and took him back to Port Moresby. Thus MacGregor's overland feet pioneered the pathways of Papua, and set a standard for his successors.

As I roamed about the Yodda valley, I dipped me topee to the memory of the miners who scratched the slopes of Mount Scratchley, and yodelled in the Yodda valley, dodging spears as they panned amidst the gutta-percha trees for the metal which has driven the world mad.

The government station on the Mambare, established by Sir William MacGregor in September 1895, was put in charge of John Green, and after him MacGregor named the Green River, a tributary of the Mambare. Patrol Officer Green did not rule long, as the turbulent tribesmen of the river resented the invasion of their valleys by miners with picks, shovels, tin dishes and "bang bang" tubes. Led by a Mad Mullah named Dumai, the cannibals of the Mambare rose in wrath, and slew five European miners early in January 1897. They also fatally pin-cushioned and stone-waddied twenty-three native carriers, coast boys working for the miners.

Strengthened by roast carrier, Dumai's band of Robin Hoods then attacked the government station at Tamata Junction on 14 January 1897. At the time of the attack Government Officer Green and Corporal Sedu were building a house, at a distance from the police station. Green and Sedu were unarmed, and the white man was on the rafters of the house while Sedu was on a hill near by, gathering palm fronds for the roof.

Suddenly a howling mob of bowmen, spearmen and clubmen emerged from the jungle and skewered Officer Green with arrows and spears. Sedu, who saw the whole incident from the hillside, could easily have escaped, as he was fleet of foot and had a long start. Instead, though completely unarmed, he preferred not to desert his officer, and went down to certain death. This instance is quoted by Sir Hubert Murray as a classic to squash critics who say that Papuans are incapable of loyalty and courage.

Inflamed with blood, the jungle rebels swept on to the police station, and gave battle to the armed constabulary, killing three constables, the cook and three house-boys. Sir William MacGregor paid a tribute to Officer Green as "a man of undoubted bravery, who took a real personal interest in the pacification of the tribes". He also paid tribute to Sedu: "This Government never had a more faithful, more courageous, or more trustworthy servant than this native corporal."

So in Papua, as everywhere else, the finding of gold was followed by deeds of heroism, desperation and violence. Throughout the centuries wars have been fought, cities razed, galleons sunk, and lives sacrificed for the age-old lust of the golden gleam. Miners, who stake their all on the chance of finding a fortune, are men of desperate character who prowl, revolver on hip, into dank and steamy tropical jungles, lured by the prospect of becoming millionaires in an afternoon. They venture alone among cannibals and head-hunters where a regiment would skirmish with caution.

An arrow whizzes, they shoot from the hip, and a dusky Stone Age man bites the turf.

Only another nigger . . . But the war-drums throb in the village, and the dead man's mates assemble. More spears and arrows whizz from the jungle, more shots are fired, and the life blood of many an innocent miner and savage reddens the streams rippling over the alluvial. So black men and white men are avenged, but there is blood on the gold, and always will be, while the adventurous strive to get rich quicker.

You never know your luck in Papua. You might pick up a stone to throw at a dog and find it's a nugget of gold. I rubber-necked around the rubber plantation at Yodda, picking up a lot of stones in the creeks—but they were only granite.

However, I picked up a lot of points about rubber, enough to convince me that rubber will be more valuable than gold, in Australia's tropical territories.

It appears there are many varieties of rubber-trees growing wild in the bush of Papua, which proves that the climate and soil are naturally suited for rubber. The species preferred for cultivation is the Brazilian type, named Para rubber, which has been acclimatized in Papua on the government stations. About seventy years ago some seeds were smuggled from Brazil by a botanist bootlegger, Sir Henry Wickham, and germinated in a hot-house at cold Kew in England. The seedlings were transplanted to Ceylon, whence they spread, like the teachings of Buddha, far and wide through Malaya. At last they reached Papua—in an improved variety. The latest dodge is to graft buds from a high-yielding mother-tree on an energetic young tree. This stimulates the youngster, like dope in a race-horse, and makes it ready for milking in five years instead of seven—sometimes.

The northern province of Papua is considered ideal for rubber-growing. The soil is forty feet deep, and the average rainfall is 158 inches. This rain arrives regularly in the late afternoon and night, but, in the morning, when the rubber-trees are being milked, the weather obligingly remains fine and warm.

The Papuans are natural gardeners, and take a keen interest in milking the rubber-trees. Each plantation is mapped out into "tapper's tasks", which means that one *tapper* has the *task* of tapping 436 trees, in an area of four acres. They start work at half-past five in the morning, and knock off at one o'clock—every day except Sunday, when the trees and the tappers both have a rest.

Every tree has a diagonal cut in its bark, near the base, about waist-high. From this, the juice oozes into a metal cup fastened to the bole by wire. As the rubber coagulates in the cut, like blood from a bleeding finger, the wound in the trees must be opened each morning, to make it bleed afresh. The first job of the tapper is to go around his task, and gouge a sliver of bark off each tree. Then he circulates again, collecting the rubber from

the cups in a four-gallon bucket. That's all there is to it, except that the rubber has to be cured and pressed in a factory on the plantation, ready for export.

The blame for Papua's backwardness and stagnation—for the fact that, after fifty-seven years, there are only 1600 whites in the Territory—rests on the shoulders of the Australian Government and people, who have neglected their responsibilities. We live in the Air Age, but our outlook towards Papua remains back in the bow and arrow days, when Sir Hubert Murray first went to Papua to lay down the law. Now that Sir Hubert is dead, there is an opportunity for a more modern outlook in our tropic Territory.

Papua has a long, low, steamy coastline, bordered with mangrove swamps and mud-flats, through which many rivers and creeks debouch in muddy estuaries to the sea. On these coastal flats the jungle grows thick and gloomy. It is this part of the country which has given Papua a bad name as an unhealthy place for whites.

Hitherto, the "Concentrate on Coco-nuts" policy has meant cultivation mainly of cleared coastal patches for that nut palm. Nearly all Papua's eggs have been in the coco-nut basket.

Behind the mud-flats, the country rises sharply, in a series of giant terraces and plateaux, to the summit of the mighty Owen Stanley Range. In these upland valleys, although the soil is fertile, the climate comfortable for whites, and the rainfall abundant, there has hitherto been practically no development of white settlement.

The natives, protected by Sir Hubert Murray, have had it all on their own. This fact is due to the horse-and-buggy mentality, which views road and rail as the latest thing in transport. There are no railways, and practically no roads in Papua, leading to the interior. The engineering difficulties of climbing the mountains were too great to overcome.

All this has been changed by air transport. Nowadays, giant freight-planes can hop from valley to valley, from plantation to plantation, with the greatest of ease, and without need of heavy expenditure on a Permanent Way—for the Perway of the plane is "free as air".

But the mentality of the Buggy Age remains in the government departments at Canberra, which drive Papua with reins of Red Tape. In pleading for modern methods, my whole argu-

ment rests on the fact that air transport solves the difficulties which hitherto have restricted the Territory's development mainly to coco-nuts on the coastal zone.

The fertile inland and upland is suitable for a big and well-planned scheme of intensive development and settlement—and the time to do it is *now*. On these plateaux natives dwell in straw villages, cultivating taro and sugar-cane, in the fashion of their forefathers, from time immemorial. Their standards of living are primitive, their methods of cultivation are prehistoric and wasteful. Sir Hubert Murray's policy of leaving them undisturbed is a beautiful sentimental dream that has had its day. Instead of keeping the natives backward, we should take them by the hand, and lead them forward to a new era.

I do not suggest that they should be dispossessed and exterminated, or unjustly treated. Papua should now be intensively developed by White Australians, in the same way that the Netherlands Indies have been developed by White Dutchmen. The Territory of Papua is just as fertile as the Island of Java, in the same latitude, with the same rainfall and climate and soil—but very many times larger in area. Yet Java ranks as one of the richest parts of the world, and Papua as one of the poorest and most backward in economic development.

Droughts are practically unknown in Papua. In fact it's the ideal place for the grumbling Australian cocky. The annual rainfall varies from thirty-seven inches a year in the "dry belt" near Port Moresby, to 230 inches in the Purari delta.

After this war ends we shall have the problem of settling and demobilizing the Returned Soldiers of the 2nd A.I.F. That is why I propose that the Commonwealth Government should begin *now* to plan for a big scheme of populating and developing Papua with White Australians, beginning with demobilized soldiers, practical farmers withdrawn from unprofitable wheat areas, and other land-hungry sons of the soil, unable to obtain holdings by ballot in Australia.

A scheme should be drawn up, *now*, for settling from 10,000 to 20,000 White Australians on the fertile Papuan uplands. Such a proposal is far beyond the scope of the Papuan Government officials, who have grown up in the tradition that Papua is a Native Reserve. It needs statesmanship, not Red Tape, to build an Empire.

On those highlands we could produce tea, coffee, cocoa, rubber, kapok, quinine, spices, and similar tropical products, for which

at present Australia pays millions of pounds a year in imports from foreign countries. As a concession to Queensland, commercial sugar-production in Papua could be barred, as hitherto. But there is no reason why the other tropical products should not be cultivated on a vast scale, with the Australian market assured.

Thanks to air transport, there would be no need for heavy capital expenditure on roads and railways, as landing grounds can be inexpensively cleared. But what is needed, *now*, is a thorough government survey of the whole problem, planning ahead with foresight, and careful preliminary development, such as establishing nurseries for seedlings, selection of localities for settlement, and similar spade work, necessary to make the scheme instantly workable, "when the boys come home".



## CHAPTER IV

WHILE at Yodda plantation, I saw native boys recruited and transported by air for service on the oil-fields near the coast. Gone are the bad old days of blackbirding, when kanakas were kidnapped and sold into servitude. Thanks to Sir Hubert Murray's welfare policy, the natives eagerly compete for the privilege of a job with the white boss. There are more natives than jobs, and only the finest specimens are selected. The Government insists that the recruits should be well cared for, and they return to their villages as rich men. Their welfare is supervised by officials of the Department of *Naked Affairs*—I mean the Department of *Native Affairs*, but never mind, it means the same thing.

Yodda valley is in a plateau, 1300 feet above sea-level on the northern watershed of the Owen Stanley Range. The natives of this district are named Orakaivas, and there are 10,000 of them living in various tribes in the environs of the valley. In their primitive state they were mankillers, sorcerers, head-hunters and cannibals. But the Murray policy has tamed them. Now their menu consists of pigs, wallabies, cassowary, scrub-hens, pigeons, cus-cus possums, and bandicoots—baked, roasted, or grilled, and served with a garnishing of taro and bananas.

The inland tribes in olden days were salt-starved, as hostile fellows held the beach positions, so the wild men of the woods had to organize forays or engage in elaborate barter, at the boundary of their own tabu areas, when trafficking with the coastal monopolists.

Nowadays the Government gives them plenty of salt and cod-liver oil, so their health is improving. On the plantations the white managers live in comfortable bungalows with a salary of £35 upwards monthly and house-boys to do the work. The natives work a fifty-hour week under strict supervision from the Department of *Naked Affairs*. The minimum wage allowed by law is ten shillings a month and keep.

Recruiting is done by licensed agents, who tour the villages, and persuade the headmen to draft a contingent of toilers for active service in mines, plantations, oil-fields, or domestic service—according to size and strength. The recruiter gets a bonus of £4 per head per boy delivered at Port Moresby. From this sum he has to pay a certain amount to the headmen of the villages and also provide the recruits with a civilized calico rami, in lieu of the shame-belt or G-string worn in the wilderness as a pudenda-obscura. He also has to pay their fares by plane to Port Moresby and supply them with a pannikin, plate and blanket.

The profits of recruiting are not excessive; gone are the bad old days—and ways—of blackbirding and brutality. Every village has a native policeman, who gets £1 a year salary and freedom from tax. He is usually a retired constable returned to his village to end his days in a position of authority. He is armed with nothing except handcuffs. But has no key for the darbies, and when he has clicked them on an offender's wrist, there is only one way to get them off—and that is to go to the Resident Magistrate of the district and confess.

Once a year at Christmas-time the plantation owners play Santa Claus and throw a big picnic for all the natives in their district, a three-day beano and corroboree, with tucker provided by the boss, and free gifts of tobacco and lollies. Around the aerodrome temporary huts of palm and banana leaf are built for the carnival, and gaudy prizes are offered for sprints, three-legged races, obstacle races, wheelbarrow races, village constables' races, and women's races—the fleet of toe lustily cheered by excited spectators. The grand finale is a tobacco scramble, and each night the villagers make "sing-sing" in corroboree-dramas, with primitive ballets representing rituals such as Catching a Pig, Planting Taro, or Spearing Fish. A white man afraid of a mosquito, and getting a native boy to swot it, is one of the favourite mimes—a comedy impersonation which always brings down the house.

Average height of the Orakaivas is five feet, with another six inches of fuzzy top added. The mops of hair, jet-black and crinkled, are bleached by the most sophisticated dandies with peroxide—an expensive luxury which costs a shilling a bottle.

"Vanity of vanities," quoth the Preacher, "all is vanity"—

from the peroxidized coiffures of the Orakaivas to the red-taloned digits of white damsels.

Saturday afternoon at the store, and I watched Mr Kingsley, the owner of Yodda Goldfields and Rubber Plantation, dishing out the weekly rations. First there was a line up of the 116 boys, while Mr Kingsley's son, Walter, lectured them on their misdeemeanours and praised them for their virtues, speaking in fluent Orakaivan.

Next was the weekly "oil-up", as the Boss Boy went the rounds with a bucket of cod-liver oil in one hand and a tablespoon in the other, giving each Orakaiva two spoonfuls of concentrated vitamins. Great smacking of lips, rolling of eyes, protruding of pink tongues, gapings of cavernous mouths and flashings of ivory teeth as the boys swallowed their compulsory doses of the fortifying fish oil.

It's strange that the finny cod of Iceland should give their lives and livers to make the dusky denizens of tropic jungles healthy and happy and full of vim. No use having victuals without vitamins. Hence this calory-cajolery.

The next issue was a piece of *kuku* paper, for making cigarettes. This is a quarter sheet of newspaper, containing fiery fulminations, pedantic prognostications, sensational slosh, sentimental slush, pro-bono-publico pontifications, and all the news and views of the world concocted by city journalists for arm-chair addicts to read.

If journalists only knew what ultimately happens to their printed words they would all resign. I've seen some funny uses of newspaper—from wrapping up sausages to wiping the window-panes. But I've never seen such an appropriate use for burning words as their handout to the illiterate Orakaivas for cigarette paper. It all goes up in smoke, as the *kuku* paper issue is followed by a handout of two sticks of strong black tobacco and a box of matches. This has to last each man a week, but the overseer goes round with the tobacco, and hands out an extra stick to industrious Orakaivas who have earned his approval.

A piece of soap, next a pannikin full of sugar, and an issue of kai-kai for the week—taro, rice, and wheatmeal. Four gun-boys are also employed on the plantation to hunt meat for the pot, with a strict accounting of cartridges used, and all empty shells to be returned to store. The conclusion of the handout

was a medical ceremony performed by Dad Kingsley, as he anointed cracked feet with zinc ointment, or washed ulcers with carbolic—a new-fangled Medicine Man of the Tribe.

It happened that one of the "boys" that day had completed eighteen months of indentured service, and had been paid off according to law in the presence of a magistrate. He was the proud possessor of nearly £9—all in silver shillings—and on the morrow was returning to his far-distant village. Part of his fortune was set aside for the purchase of a wife and the balance he was determined to spend in the store, acquiring a box of trade goods. Everything at the shop was priced either at a shilling or sixpence, to simplify computations.

For eighteen months as he toiled he had dreamed of what he would do when pay-day came, and now that great day had arrived. His bokis—a shining sandalwood chest with a brass lock—represented an outlay of ten shillings.

The filling of the bokis was a matter of careful consideration and deliberation: a pair of scissors, a mirror, several strings of beads, a safety razor, bottle of peroxide, tin of coloured common lollies, a knife, a mouth-organ, some pieces of cloth of different colours, and gradually the bokis was filled with treasures as his bag of shillings got lighter.

When he had only enough shillings left to buy a wife, he stopped buying knick-knacks, and his happiness—like his bokis—was complete. The last I saw of him he was staggering up the hill, with his eighteen months' earnings balanced in his bokis on his back. A week later he would be in his village, a man of substance—like Marco Polo returned from Cathay, bringing strange treasures and tall tales of his experiences in the service of the Taubada (white man) and the Sinabada (white woman).

This experience started me thinking seriously about the Native Problem in Papua. Admitting that strict government control of indenture and working conditions is necessary, to prevent exploitation, I still think that a big development of tropical agriculture in Papua would be for the benefit of the natives—as well as for the benefit of Australia.

Take tea. On an average we import £700,000 worth annually from Ceylon, £90,000 worth from India, and £1,215,000 worth from Netherlands Indies. A total of about £2,000,000 (sterling) per year, or 2½ million kangaroo pounds, spent on imported tea, every year!

To conserve our currency, and keep our kangaroo pounds in the country, why not grow *all* our tea in Papua? The climate and soil are proved suitable, labour is abundant, cheap, and willing, land is plentiful in Papua. Why delay? All that is needed is a progressive policy for Papua, and the new era up there will dawn. I would rather see the natives, busy-fingered, picking tea and earning wages to buy comforts for themselves, than left sunk in their primitive bliss, which isn't bliss at all, except to anthropologists and sentimentalists. The money now spent on imports would be better spent in developing Papua—which is our own possession, not a Mandate, but ours to have and to hold.

The prejudice against "black labour" does not prevent us from importing vitally necessary tropical products from India, the Dutch East Indies, and other lands inhabited by coloured races. Australians are the greatest tea-drinkers in the world. Most of our tea comes from Ceylon and Java—coloured-labour countries.

Yet in Papua we have 90,000 square miles of country, of which one-third is ideally suited for this crop, and 300,000 natives who at present can find work only as house-boys or coco-nut plantation boys, which absorb merely a fraction of the labour-power available.

Sir Hubert Murray's policy of keeping the natives in a state of semi-primitive bliss means that they have to stay in their straw villages, and only a few—a lucky few—are permitted to work for the whites, being indentured only for brief periods. They go back to their villages after contact with white civilization, and are supposed to revert to primitive life. It would be far better to open up the country to intensive cultivation of modern tropical and industrial products, to provide the maximum employment for the natives, and so raise their standards of education and of civilization by allowing them to earn economic wages.

My three days at Yodda were an eye-opener regarding Papua's potentialities—and hospitalities—as I pottered around the rubber plantations, shooting possums with the gun-boys, climbing jungly mountains and swimming in the cold clear streams which rush torrentially from the Owen Stanley Range, or prospecting with tin dish in the gold-bearing sands of the gullies.

A star boarder, I live on fresh plucked vegetables and fresh

plucked chickens. On the dinner-table at night, among the condiments, I noticed a small salt-cellar filled with white tablets containing five grains of quinine. After the meal, all the family helped themselves to a dose. Being a Novice Know-all, I thought I would not bother (until I actually got malaria) to take the prophylactic pills. Perhaps my luck would hold and I would avoid both malaria and quinine.—Mug's luck.

On the afternoon of the third day we were sitting on the veranda watching the aerodrome, where a big mob of natives were waiting to be transported by plane to Port Moresby.

There was a yell from the Orakaivans, and we peered towards the gap in the distant range. At last we saw a tiny speck; it was Troubadour Tommy O'Dea, the singing pilot, coming in his giant Junkers. We all rushed down to meet him.

There were sixty native labour recruits on the aerodrome, lined up like a platoon awaiting the troop-carrying "baloose". The men belonged to the Orakaiva tribe, and only the finest physical specimens were selected for the journey. The lucky sixty were like soldiers going away to war, farewelled by their weeping wives and the girls they left behind them.

Never had they been beyond the 11,000 feet walls of the valley that hemmed them in, and none of them had ever been in an aeroplane.

Imagine the scene on the drome, as the sixty departing heroes said good-bye to their families! They went away in three batches, twenty each, crammed into the plane, where they crouched like a load of parachutists, never knowing whether they would return safely to their base. All were smartly attired in brand new ramis of bright colours, and they all carried tin plates and pannikins shiny from the store, a regulation issue. Their fuzzy tops were combed like the coiffures of mannequins. A native constable stood on the drome, dressed in blue serge, with Lee-Enfield on shoulder, a symbol of authority.

The departing braves whooped with triumph as they entered the plane, but their women and children wailed, and roared louder than the engines, as Tommy's Junkers raced down the drome with the women pursuing it. As the plane was air-borne, at the edge of the plateau, over the Ebei River, there was I in the midst of the grass widows who were loudly lamenting the departure. One young bride, with a new-born babe, wailed louder than all the others. She threw herself on the ground, clutching

the grass, leaped up again, shrieking in misery, as tears rolled down her face and on to the babe at her breast.

An old woman seized the crying babe, as the young mother continued her lamentations. Clad only in a grass skirt and necklace of beads, she commenced a plaintive wailing and sobbing, her voice rising to a scream of sorrow, as she ran across the drome flailing her breasts with her thin arms, leaping high in the air with stiffened limbs, to fall flat on the grass, tearing tufts from the red earth with her fingers, screaming incoherently in pangs of heart pain. Up she leapt, and on and on she ran in a frenzy of frustration, with limbs hysterically stiffened, abandoned utterly to an orgy of grief till, at last exhausted, she lay face to the earth moaning and shivering.

The weeping of the other women became louder, and soon hard-boiled Clune started to weep in sympathy. Terrible was the grief of these primitive people, as their loved ones departed from the valley which was their home, and flew away in the maw of the strange bird. Higher and higher, circling towards the gap in the horizon, to a strange and unknown land, flew the silver plane—getting smaller and smaller, until the wailing ceased as the argonauts disappeared in the clouds. An hour later it came back for a second load, and the mournful scene was repeated. The primitive grief was contagious; I was never so affected in my life.

I flew to Port Moresby with the third load of recruits—in the cockpit with the pilot. Behind us in the steerage were twenty Orakaivas, crouched on the floor, heads bowed, eyes shut, fingers in ears, huddled together like monkeys in a pit on a cold day. On the rugged narrow strip of grass misnamed a drome, the women of the tribe again wept and wailed when the engines revved, while their black heroes nearly went white with fear, as the plane raced down the field, bumped, and was air-borne.

The river below dwindled to a thin chalkmark wriggling crazily across a green-painted tennis-court. As we climbed to 1000 feet, I looked back at our passengers. They were sipping their first experience of transport other than by their own legs. Fearfully they snatched a glimpse through the portholes at the tree-tops far below, then hastily withdrew when they saw they were looking *down* on clouds instead of looking *up* at them.

Then I made a big face, and one of them laughed. Then I made a bigger face, and they all laughed. Up and up we zoomed from Yodda, over Kokoda, and then over the rim of the valley

which had been the horizon of our passengers since their piccanniny days. They had come straight from villages in the jungle, and had never climbed higher than a tree-top. Now they were trying anything once, and climbing to the top of the world—from Stone Age to Plane Age in twenty minutes—flying in a Junkers bomber, they knew not where.

We soared to the summit of the Owen Stanley Range at 11,000 feet, but the Divide—which was clear when Tommy flew in—was now swathed in mist, and we went still higher, in search of an opening in the clouds. Up and up to 14,000 feet, where the air is rarefied and cold. In the cabin the primitives crouched, as they got a new sensation, and felt colder than ever before in their lives.

Then a rift appeared, and through the clouds we went. Three minutes later the ocean was in sight. Tommy sign-language the boys to look, and they rose on their haunches jabbering and gesticulating. The "Big Fellow Soda-Water!" Their eyes goggled and rolled at this strange sight, which they'd heard of, but never visualized.

Slyly the pilot tilted the tail of the Junkers. Up went the boys—and down—like tossed pancakes, as they thought their life's span had ended.

And so did I—but it was only aeronautical acrobatics. Then they saw the Bird Man laugh, and they laughed too. Nobody laughed louder than I, as the display of white ivories in black background showed that all's well that ends well.

Primitive grief is terrible; but primitive laughter is the best laugh on earth—or above it.

We glided to ground at Port Moresby. Then came another shock for the Orakaivas, as Tommy O'Dea herded them into a motor-lorry, for a drive to the seashore.

The lorry started, and all got prepared to "take-off" again, as they clung to the sides of the vehicle. But as it dashed along the narrow road lined with trees, our passengers were terrified. They were sort of used to air devils arriving and departing from their valley, but they had never seen a motor-car, and it was too much for them. They were used to a devil-devil that roared and flew, but a devil-devil that roared and ran was beyond them.

Tommy speeded up to forty miles an hour into the Port, while our passengers chattered in panic, specially when a car dashed past in the opposite direction, missing us by at least a yard.

We reached the seaside, and there were more shocks for the



shiverers, when they saw the unbounded ocean, with men noiselessly moving in canoes and sailing-boats on its broad bosom.

Thirstily they dipped their pannikins in the soda-water for a taste, and drank it—and liked it. Sea-salt is still a luxury to the mountain-man, especially when it's free.

All aboard the lugger, and off they went to the oil-wells of Apinaipi, to be tossed on the rolling waves for five days, and learn a bit more about life and laughter.

## CHAPTER V

IN the afternoon I was to start from Port Moresby for a fifteen days' cruise by the government motor-launch *Panawina* to the Fly River. In the morning I was at a loose end.

"Come for a spin over the Range," invited Tommy O'Dea, who had a cargo of two tons of groceries to take out to a rubber plantation at Eilogo, a week by road, and ten minutes by air from the Port.

"Righto," I said, and in a few minutes we were aloft in the Guinea Airways Junkers and heading inland above the jungle towards a gap in the Range. Tommy passed me a chit: "You won't be impressed with this landing ground."

We descended above a wide wooded valley, and saw ahead a rugged looking green strip with a smoke signal at its edge to give us the direction of the wind. My mate grinned and pointed with his thumb, then down we dropped and bounced on the drome, like a switchback railway and steeplechase combined.

After thirty seconds of terrification we were at rest on the "aerodrome" of Eilogo plantation. The skill of Guinea Airways pilots is proverbial; they steer their giant planes among clouds and peaks to land on rough surfaced dromes which are no more than cleared patches of the jungle, always with a slanting surface. In this primitive land, the biggest air-freight transport company in the world had its genesis and development. People down south would be astounded if they could see the non-chalance of pilots landing two-ton cargoes from the skies on a hillside sloping two ways. When there are no roads and railways, the pathway of the sky is the only way.

No sooner were we at rest than a gang of boys from the plantation were busy unloading the cargo of flour and boxes of stores. Then in went two tons of crude rubber packed in hundred-pound hessian parcels. The engines revved, we bounced down the drome towards the jungle, the propellers roaring: "I'll fly, I'll fly, by cripes I'll fly."

And we did fly too, as the plane with its rubbery load shivered the leaves on the tree-tops as it cleared the jungle and climbed over the gap.

One hundred miles to the west, clear in the exceptional visibility, was Mount Yule. Ahead was the ocean. And we glided once more to rest on Moresby drome, only thirty minutes after leaving it.

Marvellous!

After lunch, I went aboard the *Panawina*, the 55-foot launch which was to be my home for a fifteen days' cruise into the Gulf of Papua, that huge bight in the south coast of the island of New Guinea—a gulf crammed with historic memories. Into it flow the waters of many mighty rivers, fed from the Owen Stanley Range, and flowing south through a country where the rainfall is up to 250 inches a year! All these rivers broaden to muddy delta estuaries, and the greatest of them all is the Fly River, which was to be my destination.

The *Panawina* launch was manned by a crew of seven natives captained by white-man Teddy Mears, an able pilot, twenty-eight years in the government service. Our track was along the historic route of Captain Luis Torres who, in 1606, sailed in his galleon through Torres Strait, and took possession of New Guinea in his Spanish Majesty's name. He wrote to the King of Spain that the people of New Guinea are "not very white, and naked".

They're still not very white.

In the Diesel-engined galleon, as I followed in the track of Torres, I wanted to hoist the skull and crossbones; but, said Teddy, it wasn't done on a government boat. So he hoisted the flag of Papua instead.

North-west we coasted from Port Moresby for five hours, past Redscar Bay, reached Yule Island at dusk, and rowed ashore with the oars ploughing through phosphorescence, as the sea-surface animalculae glowed and gleamed.

I was the guest of Mr Mick Healy, Assistant Resident Magistrate, law-dispenser to the tribes of the St Joseph River. I plied him with many questions about himself and his interesting work.

Mick is a Queenslander, born at Brisbane in 1910. Educated at Nudgee College, he joined the Papuan Government Service in 1927, and worked as a clerk in the Port for six years. But the lure of pen-pushing palled, the wilds called, and Mick was

appointed in charge of the police guard at Lakekamu gold-fields, to protect the miners against the depredations of the untamed Ku-Ku Ku-Kus—mountain pagans, who hate the white man but would love to eat him.

"It was a glorious job," said Mick, "with nothing to do except guard seventy white miners, and 800 indentured boys." Stores came up the river Lakekamu—navigable by launch eighty miles—then transported by native carriers, a day's journey.

The gold show flopped and Mick's next assignment was to keep a governmental guard on the Archbold Scientific Expedition which in 1936 was searching the Upper Fly River in western Papua to collect birds, mammals, and plants for the New York Natural History Museum. Many months of hardship and adventure followed. Then Mick was appointed Patrol Officer at Kerema village at the mouth of the Matupu River on the Gulf of Papua. He was responsible for keeping order among the coastal Orokolos, with occasional excursions inland to the country of the Ku-Ku Ku-Kus in the Albert Mountains, nineteen days' march from the coast. Then he was transferred to Yule Island as Assistant Resident Magistrate—representative of secular authority in the terrain pacified since 1885, by the pious labours of the Sacred Heart missionaries.

Magistrate Mick told me that his main duties are to dispense justice in the villages, take the census, and collect taxes in the district overshadowed by Mount Yule, and traversed by the Tapala and Alabule rivers, with their many tributaries. For about two hundred days a year he is on patrol, travelling with an escort of twelve native police from village to village, and sleeping either in tents, or in rest-houses provided by the villagers. The police and the magistrate wear uniforms of pure wool to avoid catching cold, after being alternately soaked in the perennial rain or baked in the equatorial sun.

The natives in the controlled area near the coast are subject to an annual tax of £1 per head for all able-bodied males between the ages of sixteen and thirty-six. This system of taxation is the method of taming the uncivilized man, by teaching him the value of money, work and trade. The proceeds of taxation are spent on providing law, medicine, and health for the people of the jungle.

It also provides the white man with an endless supply of cheap labour, for plantations, mines and domestic work, as the compulsory tax is only a fraction of the wages earned, and

working for wages is the easiest way of earning money to pay tax. In fact, the Papuan villager is just like a white man: if he doesn't work to pay tax he'll have to go to the calaboose.

Civilization is taxation. The white capitalist in New South Wales with an income of £10,500 has to pay £9000 in State, Federal and Social Services Taxes, which really means he's working for the Government. By comparison the Papuan villager is lucky, as he donates only one month's earnings in the year to the Government, and he gets free medicine.

There is no tax on the Ku-Ku Ku-Kus, because they live like Ned Kellys in the mountains and the police can't catch them.

Judge Murray declares that Ku-Ku Ku-Ku is a nickname given to the inhabitants of the hinterland by the coastal Motus. "A literal translation of the word," says the prudish judge, "is not permissible in a serious report." Then his philological zeal prevails and he gives a clue to the true meaning of Ku-Ku Ku-Ku: "Its meaning bears a close relation to the exclamation attributed to Cambronne, when called upon to surrender at Waterloo."

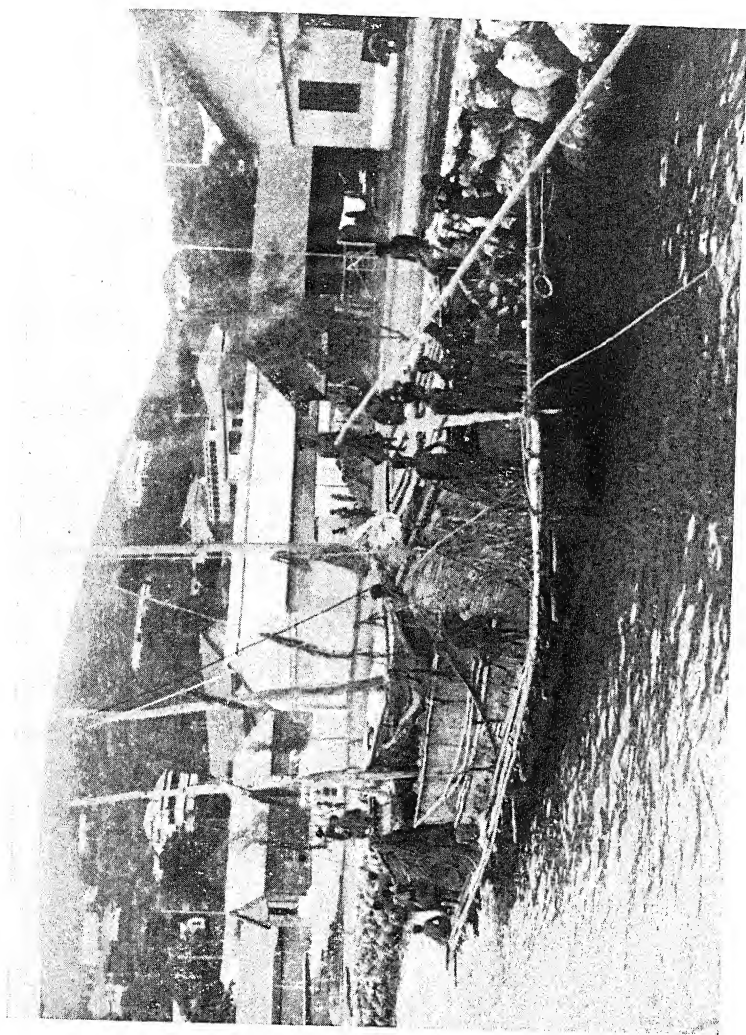
"When you're taking the census, how do you know their ages?" I asked Magistrate Mick.

"I have a smack at guessing it," he explained.

Every village has a constable who is responsible for quelling brawls, and suppressing murder and petty larceny; also for seeing that the locals keep the government track through their territory cleared of jungle for a width of nine feet.

Mick collects £1500 in taxes from his district. All the taxpayers are not indentured labourers, as only a percentage of males from each village are allowed to go away for labour service, otherwise there would be a decline of the village populations. The stay-at-homes make their money by trading, and Mick told me how this is done.

The coastal tribe, named the Roros, are pottery makers; they possess exclusive clay deposits which provide them with a valuable item of commerce far and wide. Inland dwell the Mekeos, on the rich agricultural flats along the Bioto River. They grow taros, bananas, sweet potatoes, and betel-nuts, none of which flourish on the clayey coast. So each tribe has a monopoly of something the other tribe wants, and all conditions are favourable for the birth of trade. The pot-making Roros send a messenger to the agricultural Mekeos that they want a "market" at the time of the full moon.



PORT MORESBY. NATIVE LUGGER



PAPUA. YODDA VALLEY GOLDMINING

"O.K.," say the Mekeos, and on the appointed day both tribes arrive at the rendezvous. The coastal Roros go up-river in canoes laden with pots, and marine delicacies, such as boiled crayfish, while the Mekeos arrive with the products of their gardens. All day long a roaring trade of barter is done—a bunch of bananas for a lobster, a clay pot for a palm-leaf parcel of betel-nuts. At nightfall there is a "sing-sing" feast, with dancing till the dawn to the thump of tom-toms. Then the Roros go back to the coast, and trade their betel-nuts for cash to the Motus of Hanuabada village, Port Moresby, who get their money by working for the white Taubadas.

"But what about the Mekeos?" I asked. "How do they get their money to pay taxes?"

"Oh, that's easy," says Mick. "Some of them work on the plantations, and some grow rice, which they sell to the Sacred Heart Mission."

Thus the savage has been civilized by the magic touch of coin, and the product of the Royal Mint circulates the King's picture as a token among dusky loyal subjects, who erstwhile bartered with pearl-shell and pigs' teeth, instead of the more modern shillings and sixpences.

Arrived at a village, the Magistrate lines up all taxable subjects, and calls the roll, speaking the native lingo.

"Nangi, have you got your tax?"

"No, Taubada, only sixteen shillings."

"All right. Lock him up!" says the Magistrate to the constables.

Nangi is handcuffed, and there is no trouble in collecting the Government's due from the rest of the eligibles. Meanwhile Nangi's cobbers and relations have a tarpaulin muster of pennies and sixpences, to make up the four bob that Nangi has defaulted. So his due is paid, and he is freed from durance vile. After the Magistrate's departure, there is much pyro-profanity in the village as Nangi's benefactors try to recover the four shillings they have advanced to him by a garnishee of his personal effects.

"Supposing you can't collect from a man, what do you do with him?" I asked.

"Take him to the calaboose," said Mick, pointing to the beach, where a gang of twenty prisoners guarded by a native trooper with a rifle, were building a coral breakwater.

Collecting taxes isn't all fun when the Magistrate's duties take him beyond the controlled area into the mountainous regions,



where the simple primitives do not understand the beauties and benefits of coinage culture.

Two years ago Mick was on patrol in the Kunimaipa valley, 7000 feet above sea-level, for the purpose of bringing converts to the tax fold. All day he searched, but the cunning Kunimaipas vamoosed in tree-top and long grass, eluding pursuit. Suddenly two emerged on a path, and Mick sent a police boy and carriers to souvenir them and tell them that the white man is their friend. In the course of the hunt one of the carriers disappeared and could not be found.

In the following year, when Mick returned to the valley, the Kunimaipas were more friendly and told him what had happened to the missing carrier.

"Our women chopped him into little pieces," they said, "and put the pieces into green bamboo sticks, stuffing the ends up with leaves. Then they slowly baked him, and ate him. That's what we Kunimaipas always do to tax gatherers."

It is rumoured that Mount Yule was first ascended by George Belford, a Papuan pioneer of the earlies; but it is doubtful whether he reached the highest peak. Sir Hubert Murray's policy was to "encourage exploration, in order to develop a spirit of adventure among junior officers"; consequently, in May 1935, Assistant Resident Magistrate Speedie and Patrol Officer Watkins exercised their spirit of adventure by climbing Mount Yule.

After scrambling up and down sheer cliffs, spurs and precipices, building ladders to scale bluffs and straight rocks, and clambering, sliding, falling up cliff and down gully, they reached the top, "where the height by boiling-point thermometer appeared to be 10,412 feet".

On the summit Speedie noted: "In spite of the pardonable feeling of elation at the conquest, we were rather disappointed at the simplicity of the climb after having looked forward to all sorts of hazardous adventures."

So the spirit of youth strives on, ever making light of dangers, and despondent at the lack of difficulties. The triumphant climbers lit a smoky bonfire on the summit, and nearly caused a pagan panic among the villagers for fifty miles around, who considered Mount Yule was a stronghold of the spirits desecrated by adventurous alpiners.

The epics of exploration by patrol officers in Papua are too often pigeonholed in formal government reports perused only by

the bureaucracy. Their doughty deeds should be trumpeted on the front page of every newspaper in Australia. These men are probing the secrets of *Terra Papua Incognita*, hazarding their lives for the benefit of science, and continuing the grand tradition of land-finding established by their forebears in *Terra Australis Incognita* a century and more ago.

After a chinwag with Magistrate Healy, we strolled to the Sacred Heart Mission on Yule Island, where the bearded French fathers made me as welcome as if I were a heathen seeking salvation. Right throughout Papua and New Guinea there are many mission stations, of many religious sects, teaching Christianity to the heathen head-hunters. These missions are staffed by self-sacrificing white men and women, who devote their lives to the education and care of the jungle dwellers.

At Yule Island I saw the graves of seventy-four white missionaries, both men and women, mostly from France and Germany, who have died at the post of duty since the mission was first established in the year 1885. One of the graves was that of Brother Bourjade, a famous French ace of the last war, who brought down fifty-two enemy planes. After the war he laid down the machine-gun and took up the Cross, saving souls instead of destroying them. But the man who had survived the perils of four years' European war did not survive four years' Papuan missionizing. He died of blackwater fever. Passing French warships often call to lay a wreath on the grave of this hero, who died far from Flanders fields.

The Sacred Heart Mission is housed in substantial buildings on the island, and has many churches, schools and hospitals on the mainland. Over one hundred and twenty miles of tracks have been hewed from the mouth of the St Joseph River across the sunburnt grasslands of the coast, over the swampy plains, to the forest-clad hill country, and far up on the high ranges, where Mount Yule, 10,412 feet high, squats table-topped on the backbone of the country.

The pioneer missionaries arrived at Yule Island in 1885 with the Cross in one hand, and an axe in the other, for as the natives would not come to them, they had to go to the natives. They built a hut of bamboo and coconut-palm leaves.

To-day there are one hundred and twenty children attending the mission school. The buildings on the island comprise a big church, a hospital, workshops, and residential quarters. The

mission has its own sawmill and flour-mill, and the natives have been taught how to grow rice, in addition to their local products, such as yams, taro, and bananas. In the carpentry school I met Brother Garrod, ex-Anzac, who served in the artillery on Gallipoli and is now devoting his life to the technical education of the ex-head-hunters.

I also met the scholarly Father Andre Dupeyrat, author of a 550-page volume *Papouasie*, published in Paris 1935, which tells in detail the history of the mission from its inception to the present date. Then I met His Lordship, Bishop Boismenu, Vicar Apostolic of Papouasie, who was born in St Malo, Brittany, in the year 1870. He came to Yule Island in 1898 to succeed the venerable Bishop Navarre, original founder of the mission, in collaboration with Father Verjus, away back in 1885.

Besides warring against sorcery, famine and malaria, the young Bishop waged Christian warfare against Sir William MacGregor's policy of arbitrarily partitioning Papua into "spheres of influence" among the various Protestant sects—the London Missionary Society, the Methodists, and the Anglicans—thus leaving no sphere of influence for the Church of Peter.

The Catholic Church stood for the policy of the "open go" and maintained that it was contrary to British law to restrain the teaching of Christian doctrines in any part of the King's dominions.

The L.M.S. (Congregationalists) took, as their sphere, all the south coast of Papua, the Anglicans the north coast, and the Methodists all the outlying islands. The Catholic Church, in a bitter clerical controversy, challenged the validity of this "gentlemen's agreement" approved by Governor MacGregor, and eventually won their point, and the right to raise their altars at Yule Island and its hinterland—and anywhere else they chose.

The first impact of Christianity on the sorcerers was very confusing to the native mind, as rival missionaries each claimed to profess the One True Faith. Thanks to Bishop Boismenu's statesmanship, the matter was amicably settled and the missionary sects nowadays refrain from poaching on one another's preserves.

The staff of the Yule Island Mission consists of the Bishop, five priests, and four brothers, in addition to a Mother Superior from Paris and five sisters of the Sacred Heart, all Australians. There are also several aged nuns, who have retired from the active service of the Lord. These, after forty years' missionary

labour in Papua and the Pacific Isles, are now quietly waiting at Yule Island for "a happy death".

On the day of my arrival, a thousand natives had assembled at Yule Island for a Requiem Mass to the memory of Sir Hubert Murray, a fatherly protector, whose motto was "Papua for the Papuans". Deep was the grief of the natives when he died. I have never attended a stranger Requiem Mass than this ceremony of converted head-hunters, chanting the Latin phrases in harmony and unison.

The big church was jam-packed with the gleaming torsos of copper skins, glistening with oil, and fragrant with the sweet-smelling frangipanni blossoms in the fuzzy top-knots of the worshippers. Guarding a symbolical catafalque in the aisle were four native police, with rifles reversed, and heads bowed as they gazed at the big Union Jack covering the catafalque.

The organ boomed, and the choir of a thousand voices rose to a crescendo as bearded Bishop Boismenu, in gold brocaded mitre and cope, raised his hands in blessing, attended by black altar boys and a native priest, Father Louis Vangeke, the first and only Papuan to be ordained. He studied for the priesthood in Madagascar.

Just think! Only a generation ago, these people were cannibals. Now they can sing "Kyrie eleison" as well as any whites.

After a lunch of fresh fish, home-grown coffee, and ricebread, at the mission refectory, I put to sea again in the good ship *Panawina*, coasting farther north to the oil-wells of Apinaipi.

It was a hot afternoon, as we continued in the track of Torres. Then Skipper Teddy introduced me to the beauties of tinned beer, imported all the way from San Francisco. Wake up Australia, the Yankees are taking the trade of the tropics by up-to-date packaging, which saves freight and space, and thereby gives the thirsty customers twice as much beer at no extra cost. Such is progress. At the same time I was sorry to see beer in tins replacing beer in bottles, because bottle-bashing is a great Australian sport which has its devotees in Footscray, Woolloomooloo and Woollongabba.

We anchored at Oiapu, a beach on the Gulf of Papua, twenty-five miles from Yule Island and eighty miles west of Port Moresby. As there is no jetty I was carried ashore through the

surf by a pair of wading natives, and got a wet bottle before reaching dry land.

For two days I was the guest of Mr Earle Kodyen, Canadian-born manager of the Apinaipi oil-fields, who showed me a lot and told me more about Papua's petroliferous prospects. His name is pronounced "Koden", the "y" silent, like a fowl at midnight.

There's no need to stress how important it will be for Australia when payable oil is struck somewhere in the Territories under the Commonwealth's flag. We have everything the heart of man could desire—except payable flow-oil, the liquid which lubricates war and peace. Each year we pay out ten million kangaroo pounds for imports of petroleum products from the United States of America, Dutch East Indies, Iraq, and Persia. If only we could strike oil in Papua, the stimulus to Australia's development would be incalculably great.

For many years it has been known that Papua is oil-bearing, as it has similar geological structures to the Dutch East Indies, where I saw oil-wells galore in Borneo, Java and Sumatra. The fossil-grubbers, known by the high-falutin name of "paleontologists", have reported that there *must* be vast subterranean lakes of oil beneath New Guinea's surface.

The point is *where*?

In 1920 the Commonwealth Government, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, spent £300,000 in oil search, but could not get down lower than 2600 feet, because of flowing mud and heaving shale, which gummed up the works. In those days, the old-fashioned "percussion drill" was used—a borer on the end of a wire rope, which went up and down like a pile-driver, and was useless where mud was encountered. Despite the failure to reach flow-oil, many specimens of petroliferous strata were met, so the search still goes on.

The Apinaipi Petroleum Company is entirely Australian owned, and is subsidized by the Commonwealth, on a fifty per cent contribution of all drilling expenses up to £10,000. The Government has also bought the latest drilling-plant from America, and has hired it to the company, with many up-to-date gadgets. This modern plant is a rotating drill, like a giant auger, which controls flowing mud and heaving shale—the curses which have broken so many oil-pioneers. It works from a derrick, 136 feet high. Three big boilers work the steam pumps, drilling engines, and mud-screen plants.

The value of the machinery at Apinaipi is sixty thousand kangaroo pounds. As there is no jetty, the heavy machinery was brought ashore through the surf on barges, from a ship anchored outside the coral reef. At high tide, the barge with the boilers was dragged ashore by 150 natives, then moored to coco-nut trees, and left stranded when the tide went out. Tractors and trailers then hauled the ten-ton burdens over corduroy tracks, to the drilling site, two miles inland.

Two hundred and twenty native labourers are now employed—building roads, a concrete dam to hold 2,000,000 gallons of water, machine shops, boiler houses, dwellings, and an electric-light plant to run the drill twenty-four hours daily.

Before this was done, five scout-drills were put down, at various depths to 1200 feet, to decide where to place the major well. In all these "test bores", traces of oil and gas were found, indicating that the oil has soaked up from a deeper source. The dome, or structure, is nine miles long and two miles wide, and it is believed now that the major bore is right on the spot to strike oil, if they keep on going deep enough. The drill now erected can go down if necessary to 12,000 feet, which should be sufficient, as the deepest well in the world at Bakersfield, California, is 14,000 feet.

I saw a most marvellous gadget for keeping the hole vertical, a camera which photographs a plumb-bob in the pipe, and shows any deviation from dead centre. This camera that works in the dark costs £800, and is of untold value to the oil engineer.

There are two great events in the life of an oil-well, namely "spudding-in" and "striking oil". You spud-in *on* the surface, and you strike oil somewhere *under* the surface—if you're lucky.

Well, I was present at the spudding-in of the major drill at Apinaipi, and great was the excitement as the rotating teeth started to grind their downward way, towards the subterranean crevices where the black lake of hidden fortune slumbers, and awaits the awakening touch of the magic wand. The bore is commenced with a thirteen-inch drill, in a seventeen-inch casing, leaving four inches of play for the mud-flow, which cools the drill as it bites through the strata. After 500 feet the pipe is cemented, and the drill continues on a smaller diameter, getting still smaller the deeper it goes.

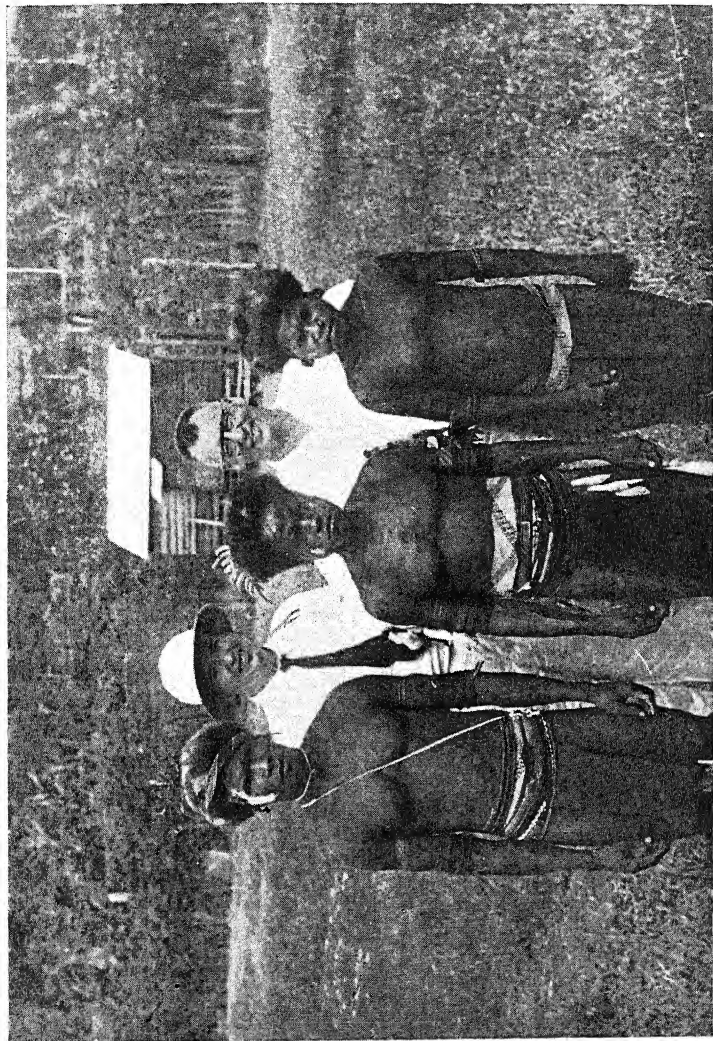
Oily optimism is the keynote of oil search, as you never know your luck. In Texas, United States of America, last year, thirty-two miles of "dry holes" were put down. But in Australia there

are only two miles of dry holes—so how do we know we have no oil in our 3,000,000 square miles? A few months ago I saw, at Tarakan in North Borneo, two wells, one a gusher and one a dryer—and they were only fifty feet apart. A few miles away, I saw 400 derricks on a space no bigger than the Sydney Domain, producing 13,000 barrels of crude oil per day. That shows the romance of oil. I'm sure we all wish the best to the Papuan drillers. Their success would be of the utmost importance to Australia; the first gusher that is struck will repay all the capital and labour that has been expended.

It is believed that the first oil sands are close beneath the blue shale now being drilled. The rate of drilling is 300 feet per week; but the process is slowed down by the need to take specimen cores, which are sent to Canberra to be X-rayed, drawn, and quartered by paleontologists who delight to dabble in shaley fossils. Geologists use the microscopic fossils brought up in the borings when wells are drilled to identify and correlate oil-bearing rock formations. The rock that overlies oil-deposits consists of petrified swamps where once dinosaurs waded. In this petrification the micro-paleontologist seeks for the minute contemporaries of the dinosaur, such as shells, worms, starfish; analysing the borings, so that the element of luck will be eliminated, and much time saved in useless boring. On the results of these tests, the Government subsidy depends, but it slows down the work while the cores are being withdrawn.

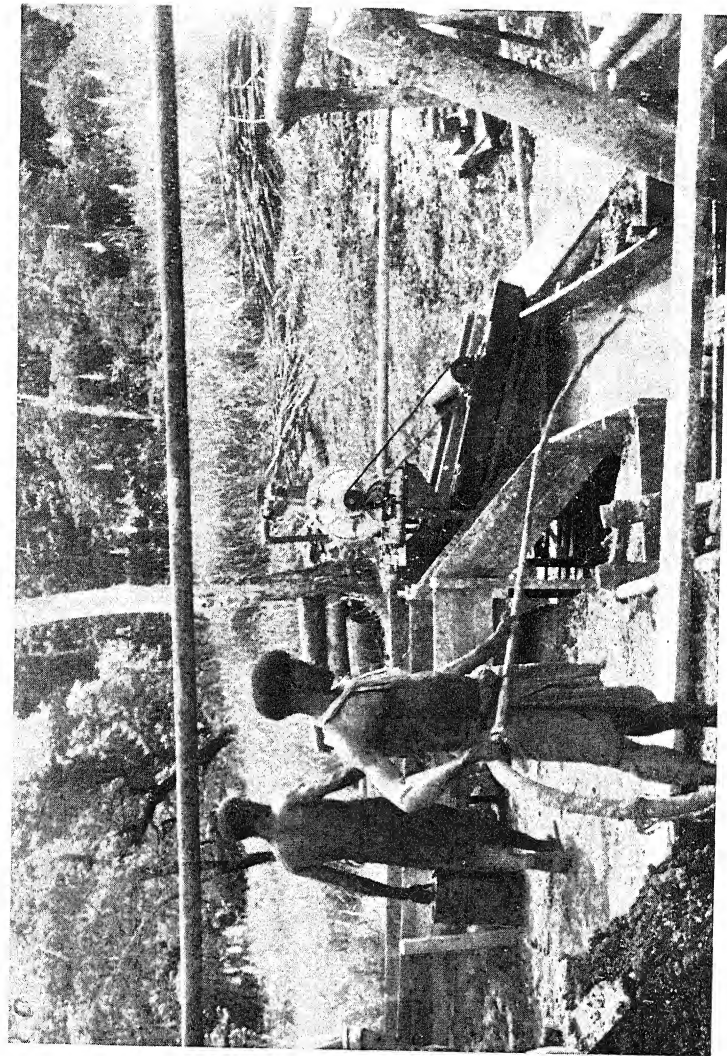
Oil may be struck anywhere between 2000 and 10,000 feet, but Manager Kodyen told me that, if oil in commercial quantities is not found in the first well, it is planned to put down several more, because he is certain the stuff is there. He ought to know, since he has "struck oil" in Persia, Greece, Mesopotamia and Canada; and he has been imported by the Commonwealth Government as an oil-drilling expert.

Great precautions are taken to guard against mishap. If oil is struck suddenly, a gusher, or gas pressure, may blow the whole works sky-high, sending out enormous quantities of mud, water and stones as big as your fist. If these stones hit the steel derrick, making sparks fly, the gas will ignite, and cause death and destruction, blowing out a crater into which the derrick and drilling plant will disappear. To guard against this, the thirteen-inch pipe is fitted with valves, operated by remote control, 150 feet away from the derrick, so that, in case of fire, it would still be possible to close the valves, and smother the flames.



YODDA VALLEY. TOMMY O'DEA (LEFT), AUTHOR AND ORAKAIVAS





APINAIPI OIL-FIELD. MUD LUBRICATION OF DRILL

Apinaipi is not the only oil show in Papua. There are other companies probing the strata in oil search. Nearly two million pounds have been spent in this quest by government and private enterprise. But oil companies think nothing of spending millions, when the prospects are good, as millions of barrels soon pay the good dividends when the gushers are struck.

While I sat on the top of the derrick at Apinaipi, Tommy O'Dea flew overhead in a seaplane, with a party of geologists. They were going to the Vailala River, where Oil Search Limited, in conjunction with two other companies, are erecting machinery valued at a quarter of a million pounds, on a dome that gives excellent prospects.

Their first task was a comprehensive aerial survey which in twelve months photographed 28,000 square miles of territory mostly previously unmapped and largely unknown. Armed with maps produced from these aerial photographs, geological and geophysical survey parties were sent into the jungle to examine on the ground the more likely looking features that had been detected by aerial photography.

As a result of this intensive surveying, the site for the first deep test well was selected in March 1940, at Kariava, about seventy-five miles from the coast of the Gulf of Papua, and not far from the banks of the Vailala River.

A difficult engineering problem had to be faced—that of transporting and erecting the very heavy drilling outfit. This outfit, capable as it is of going to a depth of 10,000 feet, comprised many heavy lifts of over five tons. To handle these heavy lifts, wharves, jetties and cranes had to be erected on the banks of the Vailala River where not long before there had been only primeval jungle haunted by head-hunters.

At the same time that these handling facilities were being built, a road from the river base to the drilling-site was constructed. This road, although only three and a half miles long, was a difficult and expensive undertaking, as it was entirely through dense jungle, over sharply dissected ground, and in an area of extremely heavy rainfall.

By November 1940 the road was through and the erection of the drilling-plant had been commenced. In March 1941 the installation of the drilling-plant was sufficiently far advanced to allow drilling operations to begin.

Throughout the period of drilling-plant installation, work had also been proceeding with the construction of living quarters for

staff and labour, offices and laboratories, workshop and power station, water-storage tanks and pipe-lines.

Since the commencement of drilling in March 1941 good progress has been maintained, and a depth exceeding 5000 feet has now been reached, which is far in excess of the depth reached by any previously drilled test well in Papua.

Drilling commenced in a 23-inch hole, and the first string of 18 $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch casing was cemented at 895 feet. A second string of 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch casing was cemented at 2327 feet and the third string of 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch casing is being inserted and cemented at the present depth. At 5018 feet, drilling was suspended while formation tests were made, and the pilot hole reamed out to full size to allow the 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch casing to be inserted and cemented. Drilling will then be resumed.

Let's wish these pioneers luck. They certainly deserve a rich reward after all the money they've spent in their paleontological peregrinations.

## CHAPTER VI

FOR two days I rode around Apinaipi on a stallion, soft in the mouth and hard on the back. When he wasn't biting my starboard foot, he was wildly galloping downhill, and I was wildly vowing I'd never ride a stallion again, oil or no oil.

Mrs Kodyen farewelled me from Apinaipi with a basket of tomatoes, and the good ship *Panawina* chugged across the Coral Sea, on the 200-mile journey to the Fly River. All day and night the launch tossed on the wide waters of the gulf, with the south-east monsoon on our port beam.

It was calm at 10 a.m., when we left Apinaipi; but by golly, white clouds turned to dark, and dark water turned to white breakers, as we pigrooted across the Gulf of Papua.

By midday I had tossed, and then lost, my breakfast, and I longed for the safety of the stallion's back. But time, tide, and sea-sickness wait for no man. Porpoises porped across our bows, and the boat boys trolled a white rag on a hook from our stern, catching an elongated sharp-toothed pike, with white flesh, and a flat red-blooded trevally. Fried for tea, it was tasty but not juicy.

At dawn we reached an historic spot, Bramble Cay, the northernmost atoll of the Great Barrier Reef, opposite the mouth of the Fly River.

This low-lying isle is only twelve feet above sea water, and five acres in area. It is the landmark for navigators through the north-east channel of Torres Strait who do not want to pay pilotage fees through the inner passage along the crescent coast of the reef.

Bramble Cay is the extreme limit of Queensland territorial waters, and the Government has erected on it a forty-feet-high steel beacon, as a silent guide to mariners.

As we glided into the lagoon, Skipper Teddy yelled the orders:

"Stop engines, Peter! Drop anchor, Maniara! Put Taubada

Clune's egg on to boil, Wesleyan, and don't boil it too hard, or I'll shove it down your blinking neck!"

After this instruction Taubada Clune's egg was properly soft-boiled, and then I went ashore in the dinghy to inspect the coral cay.

"You'd better take an umbrella," urged Skipper Teddy.

"What for?" I asked.

"You'll find out," he said cryptically. "There are millions of birds there!" So I took a brolly with me and wondered why, as the island was as white as snow.

But, as we approached, one of the boys gave a yell, and the island rose in the air!

Well, it looked like that, anyway. The white island was a mass of sea birds, named "boobies", that rose wheeling and screaming, in a solid cloud.

The white island was now green, covered with thick weeds. As I stepped ashore, thousands of fledgling booby-chicks were scurrying over the sand in terror.

Overhead their parents, in tens of thousands, darkened the sky, cursing the invaders of their isle.

And then I knew that the umbrella was a wise precaution.

But Teddy made a mistake when he said there were millions of birds. There was only one million.

Bramble Cay is a nesting-place of turtles of the sea as well as of birds of the air. The boobies nest *on* the sand, and the turtles *under* the sand.

Ma turtle swims ashore and waddles to an elevation above high-water mark, where she settles down to wallow and fin, scooping out a depression, three yards wide and a yard deep. In this she lays her eggs, at the rate of one a minute, until there are about sixty eggs in the nest. Then, flipping sand over them, the heartless mother departs, leaving the eggs to darkness and to nature.

Days later, the sandy mother hatches the turtlings, who scurry to the water's edge, dodging the beaks of the boobies. Lucky are the turtlings born at night-time, as they have a fair chance of reaching the water unpecked.

As I walked along the beach I saw hundreds of new-born turtles, the size of a five-shilling piece, flipping for the ocean and safety.

Meanwhile the two kanaka boys were searching for nests.

Soon they had four kerosene tins full of eggs; then we rowed back to the lugger. During the day the seven kanakas boiled and ate the four hundred eggs, plus about twenty pounds of trevally. That night they looked a bit white about the gills.

No wonder.

At historic Bramble Cay I stood like Balboa when he first viewed the Pacific, and I thought of the bold, brave, bad, and boisterous mariners and navigators of many nations in many centuries who were baffled by the Gulf of Papua, its saw-toothed reefs, and mangrove jungled deltas.

New Guinea is really a small continent. It is 312,329 square miles in area, and is the longest fair dinkum island in the world, if you count Australia as a continent. Greenland is not a fair dinkum island, as you can walk to it.

Squatting in the equatorial ocean, at the north of Australia, and the east of the Isles of Spice, New Guinea is separated from the Austral main only by the narrow reef-strewn channel of Torres Strait. It is perched like a clucky guinea hen brooding on Cape York.

A land of mystery, with its immense mountains and muddy floody rivers where riparian cannibal hordes dwell, it has been a menace to mariners and a curse to cartographers, who have attempted to chart its mysterious shores.

Delving in the dusty documents of antiquity, I discovered that in the year 1526 a Portuguese Captain Don Jorge de Menezes sailed eastward from Malacca intending to go to the Molucca Islands.

Instead of taking the usual route, to the south of Borneo and Celebes, he chose the route to the north of Borneo, and with a wind in his tail, got blown beyond his destination far to the east. Here in a bay of a strange land he anchored until the monsoon changed, for the square-rigged Portuguese galleons could not sail into the wind. The place where he anchored was "inhabited by a people called Papuas, a name given to them on account of their curled hair".

This was the first authentic discovery of the mainland of New Guinea by a European, and the name "Os Papuas" was thenceforth affixed to the charts. Some scholarly commentators declared that the word "Papuas" means "black" and the country was known as the land of black people with frizzed hair.

But the Portuguese mariners, with the jealously guarded

secrets of their Mappamundis, did not for long enjoy the monopoly of discovering and naming the land of the Papuas. In those days it was an open go between Portuguese sailing eastward and Spaniards sailing westward for the discovery and annexation of unknown regions. The spheres of influence clashed in the Isles of Spice.

Thither, in 1527, came Alvaro de Saavedra, a kinsman of Cortes, voyaging from Mexico. On his way back across the Pacific, shortly after leaving the Moluccas, he noted in his log: "*Anduvieron 250 leguas hasta la isla del Oro, grande y de gentes negra, con los cabellos crespos . . .*" Which freely translated means that he went 250 leagues along the Island of Gold, and saw big black blokes with curly hair.

The romantic Spaniard was a wishful thinker in affixing a golden cognomen to his discovery, as he did more hoping and guessing than digging and getting.

Unable to make his easting across the Pacific because of head-winds and no winds, the golden dreamer returned to the Moluccas to refit his ship, and started again in May 1529 for Mexico. For the second time he inspected his Isle of Gold, as he sailed along its northern coast for more than a thousand miles. According to his account: "The coast was clean and of good anchorage, but the people black and of curled hair; from the girdle downwards, they did wear a certain thing plaited to cover their lower parts. They be called Papuas because they be black and frizzled in their hair."

Saavedra died at sea on the voyage back to Mexico, and the legend of his discovery was forgotten by the Spaniards of America who had their hands full fighting and looting the Peruvian Incas and the Mexican Mayas.

Francisco Pizarro, besieged by the Incas in the Peruvian city of Cuzco, sent to Mexico for help, and Cortes dispatched Hernando de Grijalva to the rescue. But, by the time Grijalva got there, the fighting was all over. So the doughty Don, in accordance with his instructions, cruised from Peru "to search for certain rich islands which were supposed to lie to the west". After a long journey across the Pacific, the crew mutinied and killed their commander. The mutineers then made for the Moluccas, but wrecked their ship on an island where "the people are black with curled hair, called Papuas. They eat human flesh, are great witches, and so given to devilishness, that the devils go among them as companions".

Seven of the mutineers escaped the witches and devils and made their way to safety at the Portuguese Moluccas. This was in the year 1537. But the preoccupied Spaniards had no time to attend to the land of the fuzzy-tops for the next eight years as they were too busy establishing their colony in the Philippine Islands.

Then in 1545 a Spanish galleon, the *San Juan*, commanded by Inigo Ortez de Retez was sent on a tour of discovery. She sailed eastward from the Moluccas and coasted the entire length of New Guinea on its northern side "*la qual terra trovarous tutta habitata da negri*". In other words, they found it completely inhabited by blacks.

Says the historian of this galleon's gaillivante: "Because the people there were black and had frizzled hair, they named it Nova Guinea." Thus Papua, alias the Isle of Gold, alias New Guinea, was finally placed on the map—but only its northern coast.

De Retez landed on New Guinea at the mouth of the Saint Augustine River, now named Amberno, and on 17 June 1545 formally took possession of the island of New Guinea, in the name of His Majesty the King of Spain.

The southern coast of New Guinea slumbered for over half a century. Some cartographers conjecture that the Spanish Captain Mendana probed its secrets in 1595, but of this we have no confirmation. The authentic discovery of the south coast of New Guinea with the Gulf of Papua and Torres Strait was undoubtedly made by Luis Vaez de Torres.

Torres and de Quiros sailed with two ships and a tender from Callao, South America, on 21 December 1605, with the express intention of investigating the great lands south of the equator which were still fabled as islands of gold.

They reached the "Land of the Holy Spirit" named by them the island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, 1200 miles east of the Australian coast. From there the explorers made quests to the southward, apparently without discovering the Great South Land.

On 11 June 1606 Quiros sailed alone in his ship and eventually reached America.

Torres waited fifteen days at Espiritu Santo for his chief to return and then decided to make sail for the Philippines.

His classic voyage brought him to the south coast of New



Guinea. He boldly coasted along in a westerly direction, passed safely among the reefs and came at length to the Molucca Islands, by the southward route. After these cartographic capers, he reached Manila. On 12 July 1607 he wrote a letter to the King of Spain describing his trials, tribulations and discoveries. Said Torres: "New Guinea is peopled with Indians, not very white, naked, but their private parts well covered with barks of trees, resembling cloth much painted. They fight with darts and shields, and clubs of stone very gay with a lot of feathers.

"Furthermore," declared Torres, "along the coast are many islands and habitations. All the coast has many ports very large, with very large rivers, and many plains. In these ports I took possession for your Majesty."

They also captured twenty Indians to show His Majesty, but what became of these captives we do not know.

The letter was pigeonholed, and a copy of it remained buried in the Government Archives in Manila, while the Spanish Empire declined and fell under the assaults of the English sea-dogs.

Meanwhile the dauntless Dutch had driven the Portuguese from the Isles of Spice, by establishing trading-posts in Java and other islands. From there they sent out many expeditions of discovery; between 1605 and 1644 charting the coasts of Australia and of western New Guinea, and sailing into the Gulf of Carpentaria. But the coral reefs of Torres Strait baffled and deceived them. Being cautious mariners they gave reefs a wide berth, and erroneously decided that the coast of New Guinea was continuous with that of Australia in one vast bay, which they named the *Drooge Bocht*.

In October 1762 the English, sparring with the Spaniards in the Philippines, sacked Manila, and captured much loot including the Archives. These were handed to Alexander Dalrymple, a hydrographer in the service of the East India Company, who had a zeal for historical and geographical research.

Zealous Alec's eyes glittered when he saw the ancient secret Spanish documents, including a copy of the report dated 1607 from Torres to the King of Spain relating his discovery of a passage between New Guinea and Terra Australis.

Back in Britain he compiled an exclusive narrative entitled *An Account of the Discoveries Made in the South Pacific Ocean Previous to 1764*. While this book was still in the press in 1767,

Dalrymple heard of two expeditions to be made to the South Seas, one by the English, the other by the French.

He immediately importuned the British Admiralty to place him in command of H.M.S. *Endeavour* for the English expedition, but the sea-dogs of the Admiralty preferred tried and trusted naval man Lieutenant James Cook.

Disappointed, Dalrymple gave an advance copy of his book to Sir Joseph Banks, botanist of the *Endeavour*, and withheld general publication until after the departure of both the English and the French expeditions. The result was that the French knew nothing about Torres Strait, but Cook had the inside dope.

The French voyage of discovery was commanded by Louis de Bougainville, who departed from France in November 1766 with the ship *Boudeuse* and was joined at the Falkland Isles by the storeship *Etoile*.

Passing through the Straits of Magellan, the Frenchman boldly sailed westward among the multitudinous isles of Oceania, and on 5 June 1768, reached the Great Barrier Reef. The Frenchman was following his instructions "to proceed to the Dutch East Indies by the tropics". But when he saw the mighty shoals of the Barrier Reef Bougainville decided that discretion was better than grief on the reef.

"The sea broke with great violence on these shoals," he says, "and some summits of rock appeared above water. This last discovery was the voice of God, and we were obedient to it. I gave orders to proceed N.E. by N. abandoning the scheme of proceeding further westward."

Thus the voice of God prevented Bougainville having the honour of discovering the Australian east coast. The exact point at which he altered course was in Longitude 146 deg. E. Latitude 15 deg. 35 min. S., only forty miles east of present day Cooktown.

His men on the topmast "were of the opinion that they saw a land to the south-west of the breakers". And Bougainville declared that: "the trunks of trees, the fruits and seaweed which we found, the smoothness of the sea, and the direction of the currents, all sufficiently marked the vicinity of a great land. This land is nothing else than the eastern coast of New Holland."

Veering north-east by north Bougainville, on 10 June, fell in with the south coast of New Guinea: "I have seen but few lands which bear a finer aspect than this. Low plains and groves lie

along the sea shore, and from thence it rises like an amphitheatre up to the mountains, whose summits are lost in the clouds."

He was then close to the present day Port Moresby and could see the giant peak now named Mount Victoria.

Victuals were running very low, and after a pet dog was eaten "it became necessary to forbid the eating of the leather wrapped round the yards, as it might have had the most dreadful consequences".

By gripes!

Bougainville therefore decided "not to stand to the westward in search of a passage on the south side of New Guinea, which might open up a new and short navigation to the Moluccas via the Gulph of Carpentaria". He followed the coast eastward until the land ended and he saw open water to the north on 26 June: "This cape which we had so long wished for," he says, "was named Cape Deliverance, and the gulph, of which it forms the easternmost point, Gulph of the Louisiade. I think we have well acquired the right of naming these parts."

The cape he rounded is still called Cape Deliverance in the Louisiade Archipelago; but the gulph was not a gulph, as it had a strait through the middle of it.

His charts show that he thought he had a corresponding gulph to the gulph of Carpentaria.

So the dog-eating, leather-loathing Frenchman passes out of the story. He did a great job of exploration and his memory is commemorated fittingly in the bougainvillaea, one of the most beautiful floral products of the South Seas.

Meanwhile the British expedition of discovery, commanded by Lieutenant J. Cook, sailed from England in August 1768; made observations of the Transit of Venus at Tahiti in August 1769; surveyed New Zealand's coasts in March 1770, and reached Botany Bay on 29 April 1770.

The *Endeavour* then made her historic northward cruise along the east coast of Australia; reached Cape York on 21 August 1770, and there discovered "a passage into the Indian Sea".

Thus Cook rediscovered Torres Strait 164 years after Torres had sailed through. Evidently Joseph Banks, the star passenger on the *Endeavour*, had shown Cook an advance copy of Dalrymple's book containing a copy of Torres's letter. Because says Cook: "The Spaniards seem to have circumnavigated all the islands in New Guinea, and the charts show New Holland and

New Guinea as separate countries. I pretend to no more merit in this part of the voyage than to have established the fact beyond all controversy."

Cook passed through the strait between Cape York and Thursday Island, then set his course straight for Timor and out of our story without sighting New Guinea.

In the bad old days of land grabbing the nations kept secret their new discoveries and short cuts. Hence many of the maps and journals of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch navigators have been hidden, and ultimately lost in musty Royal Archives. For political reasons the cartographers caricatured continents. Even in Captain Cook's day the same rivalry persisted between the English and the French, as priority of discovery was considered to give a legal and moral title to ownership.

So Bougainville blundered in his cul-de-sac while Cook, having information from the Spanish stable, got triumphantly through the passage.

After Cook's claim had been staked and registered by the Admiralty's publication of his narrative, the secret of the centuries was a secret no longer, and Torres Strait was a highway of the world.

In 1789 Captain William Bligh of H.M.S. *Bounty* crept through the dangerous coral of the strait in a longboat with seventeen loyalists who had refused to mutiny when Fletcher Christian and his "unfeeling wretches cast us adrift in the open ocean".

Bligh reached Batavia and London, where his tale of woe, luridly told, inspired the Lords of the Admiralty to dispatch a revenge ship to the bountiful isles of the Pacific in quest of the mutineers of the *Bounty* to bring 'em back alive.

This instrument of justice was H.M.S. *Pandora*, commanded by Captain Edward Edwards, a martinet of discipline.

He sailed to Tahiti, via Cape Horn, and captured fourteen of the "unfeeling wretches" dallying with dusky sweethearts 'neath a tropic moon.

Unable to find the other nine who were cached on Pitcairn Island, Edwards steered the *Pandora* for home via Torres Strait.

On 23 August 1791 he sighted the south coast of New Guinea at a place which he said "cannot be far to the westward of the land seen by Mons Bougainville, and called by him Louisiade".

Edwards went in for a bit of nomenclature on his own, as he

named Cape Rodney and Cape Hood after the two great English Admirals who smashed the French Navy in April 1782, off Dominica in the West Indies. After this tribute to his heroes, Captain Edwards steered off from the land of New Guinea at Cape Hood, sixty miles south-east of present day two-pub Port Moresby.

Edwards crept into the precincts of the Barrier Reef at Pandora's Passage, named the Murray Isles, and then wrecked his ship on a nearby reef, drowned some of his prisoners and took the remainder to Java by whaleboat.

In the following year, 1792, Billy Bligh, whose motto was "Never say die", revisited Tahiti.

This time he was swanking in H.M.S. *Providence*, and H.M.S. *Assistant* commanded by Lieutenant Portlock. Once again the doughty Billy tackled the Torres Strait from the Pacific side, and on 30 August 1792 "as I intended we fell in with the most western parts of Mr Bougainville's discovery".

He stood to the west and two days later discovered and named Portlock's Reef, an outlier of the Great Barrier Reef, thirty miles to the north of Pandora Passage. Now they were in the danger zone, and crept cautiously forward, steering away from the shoals, until they found a passage which the masterly mariner triumphantly named after himself. Bligh Entrance now shines on the map, between Anchor Cay and Bramble Cay.

The *Providence* and the *Assistant* threaded their way westward among a maze of isles, cays, shoals and reefs to discover and name Darnley Island and many others of the region.

Five days later the *Assistant* signalled for assistance as she was being waylaid by warriors in canoes.

Says Bligh: "I knew that mischief was being done to our poor little companion by these wretches. It was not a time to trifle, so I discharged two of the quarterdeck guns with round and grape. This brought horrible consternation to them, and they fled from their canoes into the sea, and swam to windward like porpoises."

Three men on the *Assistant* were wounded by the arrows of the warriors, and William Terry, quartermaster, died of his wounds. Grieving Lieutenant Portlock named the place Traitors' Isle, but Commodore Bligh's nomenclature of Warriors' Isle was adopted by the Admiralty.

The ships continued on their anxious westward way till 23

September, when the shoal waters of the strait were left behind, and there was clear day and night sailing ahead.

Bligh was so pleased with prospect and retrospect that he allowed the crew to "spend the day without work, happy to a degree that they had passed the reefs of New Guinea".

All these navigators were more concerned with the Barrier Reef and Torres Strait than with the coastline of Papua.

But in June 1793 two merchant captains, William Bampton and Matthew Alt, commanders of the ships *Shah Hormuzeer* and *Chesterfield*, decided to take the short cut from Sydney to India, by swinging wide of the Great Barrier Reef, and passing around its northern edge close to the Papuan shore.

They reasoned that they would be safer with their sailing ships in the open waters of the Gulf of Papua than in the coral-studded seas near the Cape York Peninsula.

The strait between Cape York and Papua is one hundred miles wide. But, oh boy, what a hundred! The adventurous merchant skippers little knew what they were letting themselves in for.

They arrived at Murray Island, fifty miles south of Bramble Cay on 20 June 1793, but it was not until 30 August, seventy-two days later, that they cleared the last of the coral at Deliverance Island, on the west of the strait.

It was a wonderful feat of seamanship and hardship, especially the latter, as the vessels crept forward sounding every fathom of the way, and standing on and off the razor-edged reefs.

Tragedy befell on 3 July, when a boat went ashore at Darnley Island, thirty miles south of Bramble Cay, for water and vegetables. The natives attacked the party, and massacred five: "They were voracious cannibals, and dragged the dead seamen from the beach towards some large fires, yelling and howling most dismally."

The other three members of the watering party, though seriously wounded, managed to put off in their boat but lost sight of the ships, and steered westward in their frail craft through the strait which was the cause of all the trouble, arriving at Timor Laut ten days later.

Historian Collins laments: "How lamentable thus to perish cut off in the prime of life in the most perfect enjoyment of their faculties, lost forever to mothers and sisters whom they tenderly loved, their bodies mangled, roasted, and devoured by cannibals."

Matthew Flinders in 1802 says that the voyage of the two merchantmen through the coral in seventy-two days "displayed the extraordinary dangers of the strait. Their accounts confirm the truth of Torres having passed through it, by showing the correctness of the sketch contained in his letter to the King of Spain."

While these gallant mariners were limning the southern and south-eastern coasts of the New Guinea sub-continent some more boys of the bulldog breed, in the service of the East India Company, were making a dart at the north-western end.

Captain John McCluer, a marine officer of the company, sailed from Bombay in 1790, in the ship *Panther*, with a tender, to survey the coast of New Guinea in the vicinity of the Aru Islands.

From February to December 1791 he mapped the north-west corner of what is now Dutch New Guinea, and modestly named McCluer Inlet after himself. He then sailed north to the Pelew Islands, resigned his ship and lived for fifteen months with the natives. Then, tiring of primitive pollyannas he sailed in an open boat to the Philippines, and Macao the Portuguese possession near Canton, doing a knockabout of the China Seas and dens.

McCluer met an old cobbler, Captain John Hayes, also of the Bombay Marine, who was looking for a new source of nutmegs, and told him that there were plenty of these and other spices to be had in north-west New Guinea.

Hayes took the hint and, on 6 February 1793, sailed from Calcutta in the 14-gun *Duke of Clarence*, with the *Duchess* as tender, *en route* for the land of nutmegs and spice.

Setting a course for New Guinea, via Timor, Hayes ran into the teeth of the south-east trade-wind on 15 March, somewhere north of Australia, and could make no farther easting towards his destination.

A few thousand miles was nothing to Hayes, so he put the ships about, and ran clear round the west and south of Australia and on 25 April reached Tasmania on which there was not yet a settlement.

Not knowing that other navigators, including Bligh and D'Entrecasteaux, had been there before him, Hayes carefully charted the coast and named the River Derwent. Then, anxious to get to New Guinea, he sailed away from Tasmania on 9 June,

gave Sydney the go-by, and reached New Caledonia eighteen days later.

Some more mapping. Then the nutmeg-seekers left New Caledonia on 3 July, and followed Bougainville's track to Orange Grove Bay, but jibbed at the reefs and doubled back to Cape Deliverance. Then he threaded his way through Saint George's Channel, between New Britain and New Ireland, and ranged along the north coast of New Guinea to its western end "and found there a fine bay where I anchored on 18 December in a state trully distressing, having lost half my ships company by the scurvy, and the remaining portion were in a dying state, myself not excepted".

This was in Geelvink Bay, so named by a Dutch navigator in 1705, after his yacht *Geelvink* (Yellow Hammer).

The scurvied survivors, after seven months' hard tack on the voyage, gorged on spinach, lemon-grass, scurvy-grass, and tropical fruits supplied by the hospitable natives in the harbour "which I called Restoration Bay, for we were not only restored to health, but to apparent affluence from the richness of the country".

The site of Hayes's Restoration is now marked on the maps as Dorey Bay, near the present day town of Manokwari, the capital of Dutch New Guinea.

Hayes named the district New Albion, and decided to found a settlement there. He built a stockade named Coronation Fort, and 25 October 1793 hoisted the Union Jack, fired a royal salute of twenty-one guns, and proclaimed annexation of the territory in the name of George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain and Ireland—also of France for good measure, as Britain was having one of her usual wars with France.

Hayes proclaimed: "No other nation, state, power, or person has the smallest claim to any part whatever of these possessions, nor right to trade directly or indirectly within these boundaries."

That settled the argument and New Albion boomed *pro tem*. Collecting a boatload of spices Hayes sailed away on 22 December, leaving the fort and nutmeg factory manned by three officers, twelve European seamen, and eleven lascars.

The possession-taker sailed to Batavia, but was unluckily conscripted to serve in the Royal Navy against the French.

He reached Macao on 20 July 1794, and there met his old friend John McCluer, the beachcomber of the Pelew Islands.



Hayes implored his cobber to take a cargo of supplies to the fort holders of Restoration Bay.

McCluer sailed four days later in the *Venus* for Pelew Islands, and thence set a course for Restoration Bay, where he found the colonists of New Albion in need of restoration. Several were beyond restoration or respiration; the remainder were debilitated and nearly at the end of their tether.

He brought succour, but the settlement was finally abandoned in 1801. The East India Company declined to confirm Hayes's annexation; they said the nutmegs of Restoration Bay were not nutzotic.

Instead of compensating him for his perilous enterprise, the mean-minded directors claimed there was nothing new in it as that part of the coast had previously been visited by an East Indian agent, named Captain Forrest, on 27 January 1775.

The only eleemosynary benefit which the mean company bestowed on Hayes, was an offer to purchase thirty copies of his Journal, if and when published. Unfortunately for Hayes and his heirs, his charts, manuscripts and memoirs were never published, as they were souvenired by a French man-of-war, while on their way to England to be printed. So ended the dream of an Empire builder—the first white settlement on the mainland of New Guinea, and the first British annexation of that torrid terrain.

In 1858 this part of New Guinea was for a few months the domicile of the celebrated British naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace, collecting specimens. He claimed: "I found myself established as the only European inhabitant of the vast island of New Guinea."

Now we'll return to the Gulf of Papua on the south.

Next after Bampton and Alt on the corally scene of the south coast of New Guinea were the two French frigates, *L'Astrolabe* and *La Zelee*, commanded by Monsieur Dumont D'Urville.

This zealous expedition sailed from Toulon in September 1837 and cruised among the penguins and ice floes of the frosty seas of Antarctica. Then they came to the tropics to thaw, and made their landfall at Cape Deliverance in the Louisiade Archipelago on 23 May 1840, intending to complete the survey started by their gallant Gallic predecessor Bougainville seventy-two years previously.

"These lands," said matelot D'Urville, "since their discovery

by Bougainville, have not been sighted again by any of the other navigators of the Pacific. They thus presented to us a vast field of hydrographic exploration."

The frigates cruised westward along the coast of Papua, till on 27 May they located Bougainville's "Orange Grove Bay"—but their predecessor had mistaken mangroves for orange groves. Two days later the ships sighted a high peak on the mainland which was christened Mount Astrolabe.

The doughty D'Urville then determined to force the tricky passage of the reefs in the classic route of Torres, Bligh and Company. But, after leaving Darnley Isle on 1 June, both frigates got stuck on a reef in a narrow channel at Toud Island.

Out went the tide of Toud, leaving the frigates floundered, and the mournful matelots thought that never again would they see La Belle France.

For seventy-two hours they alternately cursed and prayed, until a high, high tide miraculously refloated the vessels. After another eight days of terrible anxiety creeping through the reefs "we said adieu to these dangerous surroundings". And a week later they were in Koepang, the first Frenchmen to tour Torres Strait.

Still the south coast of New Guinea remained unmapped, a challenge to cartographers, and nobody knew the shape of the head of the gulf.

To solve this mystery, the Empire builders of the British Admiralty, ever seeking to make the coasts of the world safe for their ships, sent H.M.S. *Fly*, commanded by Captain Blackwood, with the schooner *Bramble*, commanded by Lieutenant Yule, as tender, to commence explorations.

In 1843 the surveyors reached the tropic waters of the northern Barrier Reef and continued their thirsty work of map-making for two years, with occasional trips for refreshments to Port Essington, Surabaya, Singapore, Swan River, Hobarton and Sydney.

On 11 April 1845 the two ships anchored at the Murray Islands, and Skipper Blackwood with Naturalist Jukes cruised in the pinnace.

Says Jukes: "Thirty miles north of Erroob (Murray Island) another patch of igneous rock shows itself in the centre of a small reef, called by us Bramble Key, but the native name of which is Caedha."

Without realizing it they had reached the northernmost

extremity of the Great Barrier Reef, the last of a myriad islets in the 1200-mile coral necklace that garlands—and protects—the coasts of north-eastern Australia.

So here I stand beneath an umbrella sheltering from a rain of unfossilized guano on Bramble Cay, the northernmost limit of Queensland territory.

Ten thousand years hence my descendants will mine super-phosphate on this refuge of sea birds, who prey on turtles' eggs, and in turn are preyed upon by rats. Even in this oasis of the ocean there is no peace; the everlasting war of nature rages as the strong and cunning destroy the weak and careless. The cry of birds fills the air, and the lap of waves on the coral is the only other sound to be heard.

Few men visit Bramble Cay, and the only sign of humanity's omnipotence is the giant beacon for which the mariner eagerly searches as he voyages by the passage outside the Great Reef.

Here is his turning-point. He anxiously scans the horizon for it, then gives it a wide berth and discards it, as he makes his westering, leaving the razor-edge of danger astern.

## CHAPTER VII

LEAVING Bramble Cay we chugged westward forty-six miles, to Daru Island near the Fly River. The water from this mighty stream makes the salt sea fresh for thirty miles from its mouth, and the dun-coloured ocean is littered with debris, brought down by the current.

Dozens of nipa palm-trees floated along, roots submerged and bole in air, like a periscope.

These "Fly River Submarines" cause many a false alarm about U-boats. The Navy only says, "I'll see Fly."

I had a swell time in the gulf with plenty of ups and downs, as the *Panawina's* plimsoll sloshed in the brine. The current was against us, and it took seven hours to reach Daru, the capital of the Western District of Papua, which comprises the basin of the Fly River, extending to the Dutch border.

The original seat of Government in the Western Division was at Mabadaun on the mainland thirty-five miles south-west of Daru. A station was established there in 1889 by canny Sir William MacGregor on some "waste and vacant land".

But when the buildings were erected the canny Papuans of this part who have decided Semitic schnozzles—and instincts—outcannied the Scot by laying claim to payment for their waste and vacant land.

Resident Magistrate Bingham Hely was not satisfied with the site at Mabadaun, as it lacked a good harbour for the pearly fleet of Torres Strait, and the waste land was too poor for cultivation.

So he cast around and found a better site at Daru Island where there is a good harbour and "the soil is superb and plenty of wind reaches the top of the hill".

On 17 April 1893 Hely abandoned Mabadaun and left for Daru, where work was started on the first building—a gaol

which was finished on 28 June. It was built of logs with a nipa palm roof and had accommodation for twenty-five prisoners.

Within the next year quarters were built for the magistrate and the constabulary, also a government store and eight acres were tilled for cultivation.

Burns Philp and Company also opened a store and there were 102 pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer boats licences from the new port.

So the western capital got started. Nowadays, it is not only the capital, but it is still the *only* white man's town in the Western Division—and it hasn't got a pub. The area of the isle is seven and a half square miles, and it is sixty feet above sea-level at its highest point.

The population of this metropolis is thirteen persons, including three white women. I send them a greeting, as modern pioneers of Australia's tropical territory; forgotten men and women, doing their duty with cheerful hearts—and thirsty throats.

One of the early magistrates was an Englishman, Charles Gideon Murray, who dispensed justice in Daru in 1900. He planted crotons which have now matured and made the township croton-conscious.

During his magistracy of Daru, Gideon Murray, in August 1900, went for a trip for seventy miles up the Fly River to the village of Gaima, where he intended to strike overland through marsh and jungle to the Bamu River.

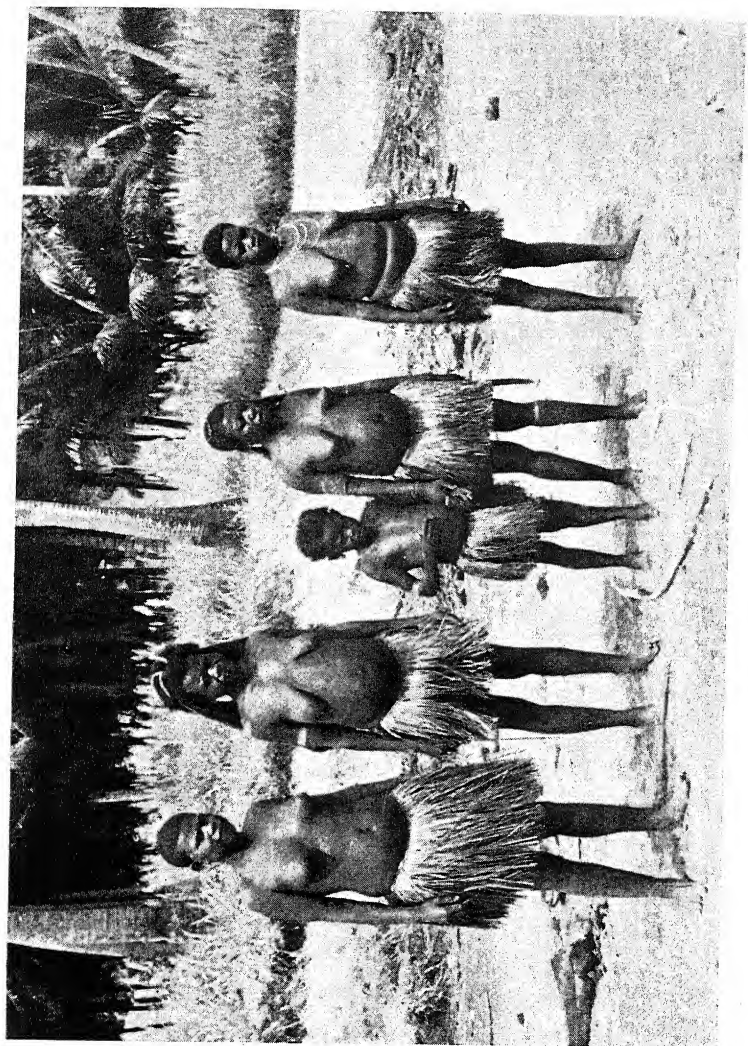
He did not reach his destination, as the bogs were too boggy for him.

The first night they camped at Gaima full of enthusiasm; "but," says Gideon, "the village dogs stole all my bacon."

So the explorer failed to bring home the bacon. However, he paved the way for later expeditions.

Plain Mister Murray, born 1877, he departed from New Guinea to South Africa for the Anglo-Boer War, and won the Queen's Medal with two clasps. Then he returned to England, joined the staff of the Colonial Office, and being a man of pull, became Governor of the Windward Islands in 1916.

In 1927 his father died, and Gideon Murray became Viscount Elibank, with a seat in the House of Lords. He was a scion of an ancient Scottish family, the Barons of Ettrick Forest since 1643. Lord Elibank of Daru has risen to dizzy heights, and now



LADIES OF APINAIPI



EARLE KODYEN, MANAGER OF APINAIFI OIL-FIELD

is Chairman of the Federation of Chamber of Commerce of the British Empire. His recreations include golf, shooting, and croton-planting.

My host at Daru was Hughie Beach, who recruits Fly River natives for Thursday Island pearlers. Hughie told me that, when he arrived at Daru in 1900, he was so green that the goats wanted to eat him. But, to-day after forty years at Daru, *he eats the goats!*

Forty years ago Daru Island was in the boom as a recruiting depot for kanakas to work on the Thursday Island pearling-fleet. In the peak years five hundred "boys" annually were signed on from the Fly River estuary, but nowadays the Queensland Government restricts the quota, so as to increase employment opportunities for their own aborigines.

Hughie is recruiting agent, and gets £4 per head per boy. Out of this he has to land the divers at Thursday Island, and bring them back home after their twelve months' indentured service.

Swimming boys get thirty shillings per month and keep, and deck hands fifteen shillings a month.

The export of kanakas is the principal trade of Daru. But it is also an entrepôt for missionaries, magistrates and mariners. It is the world's smallest capital, and one of the hardest to get at, on the extreme western edge of white civilization in Papua.

The Chief Resident Magistrate is Leo Austen, paternal protector of thousands of jungle-dwelling riparian roamers, so numerous that they can't be accurately counted. Throughout all this vast area in the basin of the Fly River, there is only one rubber and coco-nut plantation—at Madiri Island in the Fly estuary.

Magistrate Leo was away on patrol when I called at Daru, so I was shown over the capital by Gagamu, a serge-clad police boy, whose story was told me by Assistant Resident Magistrate Faithorn.

Gagamu is an armed constable of the Royal Papuan Native Constabulary. Previous to my visit he had been on a trip up the Fly River with Patrol Officer Champion.

When the party reached the Strickland River, Constable Gagamu got permission to climb a big tree and spy out the land, while the others were cooking. He climbed the tree all right. But when he slid down, he walked away into the bush because,



as he says, "My back was to the place where they were cooking the food, but I thought my face was towards the way I had come."

Night fell, and Gagamu "was surprised to find myself on top of a very big tree. Maybe some wood spirits had taken me and placed me at the top of this tree. I then went to sleep in the tree-tops."

Meanwhile Patrol Officer Champion, worried, searched for the missing constable for two days, but had to return down-river as provisions were short. Three months later the patrol returned to the Strickland and made another search for Gagamu. Reaching Lake Murray in the launch *Vailala* they anchored at dusk. A canoe came out from the village. In it was a tatterdemalion who shouted:

"I am Gagamu!"

Immediately the crew of the *Vailala* jumped overboard and swam away shouting:

"Puri puri! Magic! Gagamu is dead, and his ghost has come to haunt us!" But it was a live ghost with a wonderful tale to tell of wanderings in the wilderness.

After losing the party he felt cranky in the head, and according to himself he dwelled in the tree-tops for twenty-five days and twenty-five nights, like a stylite on a pedestal, without food or drink, hiding from the head-hunters, who prowled with bow and arrow in the jungle beneath. When he descended from his arboreal ordeal, a head-hunter arrowed him through the chest, and sooted a dog on to him.

Gagamu chased the bushman with his tomahawk but only caught the dog, which he killed. Then he pulled the arrow from his wound, and roamed like Tarzan through swamp and jungle, eating goru palm, bamboo shoots and raw sago, while maggots festered in his shoulder blade.

With his trusty tomahawk he made a raft. But this capsized in the fast current, "and," says Gagamu, "I lost my tomahawk. It fell to the bottom of the river. I was too sorry about my tomahawk which gave me life, and that is why my belly was sore." Eventually he reached Lake Murray where a friendly native bathed his wound in hot water, then "held the wound over a fire, until the heat made the maggots fall out".

After that cauterization, Gagamu felt better and dwelled with the Lake Murray tribe for a while. "But," says he, "I was tired of eating sago, that is all they seemed to eat. I was overjoyed

to see the *Vailala*. I said to myself, I am saved. It is more good I am alive. And that is the finish of my tale."

A policeman's lot is not a happy one, particularly in Papua; it's all right for those who revel in tribulation. Assistant Resident Magistrate Faithorn, an ex-Imperial Officer of the Indian North-west Frontier seems to be a reveller.

He told me that the Western Division of Papua is one vast jungly swamp, peopled by sago-eating savages, who are killers, but not fighters. They prefer to find a lone victim and arrow him when he's looking the other way. They use spears also—for catching cat-fish, prawns and eels. When there's no man flesh available, they spear cassowary, bandicoots, wild pigs, and tree-climbing kangaroos.

There was a batch of murderers undergoing prison sentence at Daru. A few months previously a report came in that there had been a murder raid at Lake Murray. A patrol went out in charge of A.R.M. Faithorn to investigate. The police party travelled in the *Vailala* with ten native police and twenty-four carriers. Up-river 250 miles, at the village of Bandivi, they made contact with the raiders, and entered their village unexpectedly. The women and children bolted to the bush but the men brazened it out.

Faithorn assembled the village's sixty fighting men in the dubu-house and told them he had heard that some bad men had raided a village and captured some women, after killing three. As these words were translated the denizens of the dubu went jungle in a panic, but fourteen were nabbed and manacled. Then the police party visited other villages, recovered the kidnapped women, and took an additional twenty prisoners.

All were brought back to Daru for trial, and sentenced to nine months' grass cutting. Judge Murray's motto was: "The more ignorant the native, the more lenient the sentences." He wanted to send them back to their village with a good opinion of the Government. In fact the best behaved of the prisoners are made village constables, on the principle of "set a cannibal to snatch a cannibal".

I watched the Bandivi penitents cutting kundu grass. There wasn't much hard labour about it; more grins than growls among the felons, and the grass grew faster than they could cut it, as Daru's rainfall is eighty inches a year.

From the house of correction, I went to the house of salvation,

where I had a pleasant afternoon-tea with Rev. Harold and Mrs Schlencker, of the London Missionary Society, which has proselytized in this region since 1891.

The L.M.S. has played a remarkable part in the history of the Pacific Isles. The Society was established in London 1795, to follow the Biblical injunction: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Funds were subscribed, and the first missionary ship, the *Duff*, reached Tahiti in 1797.

Ever since then missionary schooners have cruised the isles, and established many stations to bring the torch of civilization to the heathen of coral seas. Many a missionary has come to a gruesome end, devoured by cannibals—a tragedy of religious sacrifice, despite the jeers of comic cartoonists.

The first L.M.S. missionaries in Papua established their station in 1871 at Darnley Island in Torres Strait. From there they extended their sphere of influence to the mainland by the energetic efforts of the pioneer colporteurs, Messrs Samuel MacFarlane and A. W. Murray.

These pioneers were reinforced in 1877 by the celebrated soul saver, Rev. James Chalmers, whose name was Papuanized by the natives to Tamate—rhymes with jammit. With Missionary Schlencker, I visited the grave of Chalmers in Daru, and also the weatherboard church, where a plaque beneath his bust records the date of his death as 8 April 1901. More about Tamate later.

Daru has three stores, where the pearl-divers returning flush from Thursday Island can spend their shillings in buying a bokis to take home to the village belles. This lonely isle should have been a great pearling centre, but the Queensland Government had territorial ambitions and claimed all the waters of the Barrier Reef up to Bramble Cay as their Lebensraum.

The pearling-fleet is thus focused on Thursday Island; Queensland gets the pearls, and Daru stays in the doldrums.

So life doles on.

I stayed for the night in Hughie Beach's house, listening to the rain on the roof, which fell so loudly that we had to shout at each other as well as shout for one another. Next morning I had drinks with storekeepers Maidment, Wybone, and Luff, and tea with Customs Officer De Groen, and the three white wives of the port.

Magistrate Leo Austen, and Patrol Officers Champion and Turner were away from home, somewhere in the recesses of

the mysterious Fly River. Brave are the wives of Daru who wait on the lowlying isle for the return of their loved ones, never knowing when or whether they will return.

Back aboard the *Panawina* I saw with satisfaction that Skipper Teddy Mears had taken aboard a new batch of bread baked by Beachcomber Beach. Just about time, too. After four days our Port Moresby bread had blue mould, but I didn't jib at that until it grew green whiskers.

Hospitable are the Papuans, and we have been loaded with gifts at every port-of-call: lemons at Yule Island, tomatoes at Apinaipi, and now bread at Daru, to go with the fish caught in the gulf. At midday the *Panawina's* pick was hoisted, after a final farewell round of tinned beer, and soon we were headed northward ho towards the estuary of the Fly. No need for charts here, as honeysuckle navigators just follow the mangroves. Still, we took aboard a Daru native pilot to keep us off the sandbanks as we made for Tora passage between Bampton Island and the mainland.

The nearer we came to the estuary of the giant river, the muddier was the flood. On the mainland there was only mud to be seen crested by dark green mangroves and tufted nipa palm. We passed Mibu Island in the south entrance of the estuary where Mrs Mowling has a coco-nut plantation. She is the only planter in the Western Division. Skipper Teddy told me her foes were the rats, who ate the coco-nuts on the trees. She kept a staff of savages with bows and arrows to shoot the rats on the trees, paying them one stick of tobacco blacker than themselves for every twelve rats they arrowed.

Teddy tried the same tactics on the *Panawina* where his foes were cockroaches, who ate his toenails to the quick while he slept. He offered his crew a bonus of one stick of tobacco for every hundred cockroaches captured on board. It worked very well till he found the crew were smuggling roaches on board, and breeding them in captivity.

The wind dropped; the sun dropped; the anchor dropped; and we dropped a couple of empty beer tins overboard, as night fell on the Fly estuary. Mosquitoes hummed, and the rain splashed viciously on the decks as I slipped into slumber on my bunk, oppressed and elated by the brooding mystery of the tepid night.

All my life I had wanted to visit the Fly River, and now at last I had realized my ambition—to Fly Anything Once.

## CHAPTER VIII

BEFORE we chug up the mighty Fly River, let us have a quick back glance at the history, geography, and potamology of this unique riparian region.

In Chapter Six we left Commander Blackwood of H.M.S. *Fly* discovering Bramble Cay in April 1845. The *Fly* flew on and arrived at Bristow Island, near Daru, on 25 April 1845. This had been named and charted by Captains Bampton and Alt in July 1793, but all the land to the north of it was unmapped.

Skipper Blackwood weathered the shoals and mud-flats along the coast and anchored in five fathoms of muddy water on 28 April.

Says the Chronicler Jukes: "Several large openings or gaps in the shore were remarked, up the widest of which no land could be seen from the masthead . . . on dipping up some of the water and tasting it, it was found to be only slightly brackish. This was at a distance of ten miles from the shore, and confirmed us in our opinion of the opening being the mouth of a large river."

The *Fly* anchored, and Skipper Blackwood went away in the gig to examine the river. He found it "about five miles wide, and the water so fresh as to be quite drinkable". Going near the shore the explorers in their tiny boat saw five hundred men rushing from the woods, so Blackwood, with many a backward look, hoisted sail and flew back to the *Fly*, hotly pursued by four canoe loads of savages each with a crew of forty.

The gig "shook off her pursuers", and next day Captain Blackwood continued a rough survey of the coast northwards as far as the present day Kikori River.

On returning to England he published his chart showing this part of Papua, north of Bristow Island, as "a low coast intersected by many large freshwater channels". An opening is shown on the chart in the position of the present day Fly River marked "apparently the mouth of a large river".

We don't know who named this river the Fly, as Captain

Blackwood was too modest to affix the monniker of his ship to his discovery of its mouth; but eventually on Admiralty charts the name Fly River appeared, and it was so named on a map issued with a House of Commons White Paper 1876.

For thirty years after Blackwood's visit to the Papuan coast the anonymous and suppositious river he discovered remained unexplored until the year 1875, when the London Missionary Society was presented with a steamer to salvage souls.

This vessel was the *Ellengowan*, of thirty-six tons register, given to the Society by Miss Baxter, a spinster of Dundee after whose home the steamer was named. Miss Baxter's gift was destined to play an important part in the potamology of Papua. Despite centuries of map-making by breeze-wafted navigators who had defined the coastline of the giant isle, no white man had penetrated its jungle fastnesses.

Missionary MacFarlane decided to utilize his sturdy little steamer for inland navigation of the streams which drained into Torres Strait and the Gulf of Papua.

The *Ellengowan* was stationed at Somerset, Cape York. On 25 August 1875 she made her first exploring trip to a river known as the Mai Kussa, debouching from unknown Papua to Torres Strait, eighty miles west of Daru.

Rev. S. MacFarlane and Octavius C. Stone took the steamer sixty-four miles up this stream, which they named the Baxter River in honour of the donor of the *Ellengowan*. Here the river narrowed to fifty yards: "we found continuing further would be accompanied with some risk of being unable to turn her round for the length of the *Ellengowan* is eighty feet and she draws six feet of water."

The intrepid explorers proceeded in the life-boat another twenty-seven miles, until they reached ninety-one miles from the mouth, but here the Mai Kussa was only ten yards wide and they realized that the promising estuary had led to a blind alley. Before returning: "we took a portrait of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, cut out a frame an inch deep in the tree, and inserted the carte, which can be seen from the river. We then fired a royal salute and gave three hearty British cheers which made the forest ring."

Farewelling the Queen, the venturers returned downstream noting that "the air was filled with sweet odours, and the forest with the notes of birds", but all things considered their voyage was a disappointment. This was not the giant river draining

Papua's immense rainy hinterland, so the missionaries decided to give it another go in Captain Blackwood's estuary to the north of Daru.

The second riparian roam of the *Ellengowan* started from Somerset on 29 November 1875. With missionary MacFarlane went Police Magistrate Chester representing the Queensland Government, and Signor D'Albertis, Italian scientist and explorer, representing science.

Leaving Daru and Bristow islands astern, the sturdy Scotch steamer chugged into Blackwood's "supposed mouth of a large river" on 6 December 1875, and pushed her prow boldly into the muddy flood. It was a large river too, as it was five miles wide at the entrance and got wider farther up.

Says MacFarlane: "About thirty miles from the mouth, it is difficult to say what the width is." They had discovered the central drainage canal of the southern slope of New Guinea's backbone range which towers to 11,000 feet in one of the heaviest rainfall areas of the world. Here the monsoons daily drop their moisture from the sweating clouds. Many a mickle makes a muckle, many a trickle makes a torrent, and many a torrent makes a river fly.

We don't know who put the Fly on the map, but the *Ellengowan* bore the first white men into the sombre waters beyond its estuary. The *Ellengowan* nosed upstream against a fast current for two more days, passing several villages and astonishing the natives.

On the third day, 8 December, they neared a large village, where a fleet of feathered heathens were waiting to greet the intruders—with a bow and arrow fusillade. The defending fleet of nine large war canoes, each containing about forty warriors, converged in battle order on the missionary steamer, encouraging themselves with "yells and frantic gesticulations".

Says Rev. MacFarlane: "They seemed delighted at the prospect of our capture, and from their jeering attitude were evidently confident of success." But the cannibals were counting their missionaries before they were casseroled. "Although we did not desire war," continued the narrator, "we were quite prepared for it, believing that our heads would be of more service to the mission cause, on our shoulders, than on a pole in the middle of a heathen village."

The cranium-conserving Scot authorized Signor D'Albertis to fire on the howling horde and, says the Count: "Two heavy balls

from my rifle struck the nearest canoe, and this sufficed to damp the ardour of our assailants." It was like a regatta as the cannibal canoes flew over the calm surface of the Fly to get out of bullet range. The peaceful missionary justified this resort to force by saying: "It is not likely that they will attack the next vessel that passes this way."

After the battle of the Fly, the *Ellengowan* proceeded upstream for another six days, until 15 December, reaching a point "150 miles from the mouth of the river where they named Ellengowan Island, being the highest point reached by us".

They went down Fly faster than they went up, until seventy-five miles from the mouth they stuck fast on a mud-bank near a native house 500 feet long, and "anxiously wished for high water, as the Apostle Paul did for daylight".

Sure enough the high water came together with canoe loads of natives, who shouted "Mero! Mero!" (Peace! Peace!)

So the *Ellengowan* peacefully departed from the Fly River and reached Cape York on 27 December. They had proved that Captain Blackwood's suppositious large river was a fair dinkum large river—so large that 150 miles from its mouth it was seventeen fathoms deep, and a mile wide.

Great was the disappointment of Signor D'Albertis when the missionary decided, through fever and lack of provisions, to turn back. Says he: "A world of hope died within me. Arrived at the threshold of the enchanted land, I am doomed to retrace my steps and as we sailed away I said within myself: 'Farewell Fly River! We shall meet again and soon!'"

And soon the signor was back again.

He went to Sydney and in fluent Italian persuaded the phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon Governor of New South Wales, Sir Hercules Robinson, to grant him a steam launch for an exploration of the Fly to its source.

The launch was named the *Neva* and her engineer was none other than Lawrence Hargrave, inventor of box kites, and grandfather of aeroplanes.

This zealous engineer had a zest for the tropics. Born at Greenwich, England, he arrived in Australia, aged sixteen, and five years later joined a syndicate of seventy-five Sydney hopefuls who chartered the brig *Maria* for a gold-seeking expedition to New Guinea.

The crazy brig struck on a reef near Cardwell, Queensland,



on 26 February 1871, and thirty-six of the crew were drowned or killed by blacks on the mainland. Lawrence Hargrave was one of the lucky wreckees who returned to Sydney. But "never say die" was his motto. So in May 1875 he started again for New Guinea as engineer of the steam survey launch attached to the barque *Chevert* of 314 tons.

This was a scientific cruise under William Macleay the famed insectologist of Sydney, who wanted to add New Guinea rarities to his extensive collection of Australoddities.

The *Chevert's* launch, on 30 June 1875, explored the Katou River near Daru, but it was a dud, as the river fizzled a few miles inland: "A fallen tree proved an insuperable obstacle to navigation, otherwise we had a most pleasant day." Laden with a Katou River collection of skulls, weapons, tools, ornaments, snakes, shells, crabs, insects, birds, lizards, fishes, Mollusca, Lepidoptera and other insects, the *Chevert* sailed away and reached Yule Island on 18 August.

Here the Sydneysiders found Signor D'Albertis, also leaping after Lepidoptera, mud-combing for Mollusca, and collecting Coleoptera.

When the *Chevert* returned to Cape York, engineer Hargrave resigned and joined a party led by Octavius Stone to explore the hinterland of Port Moresby. This was going on while MacFarlane, Chester, and D'Albertis were making their first penetration of the Fly River which caused Signor D'Albertis to vow that he would give it another Fly.

D'Albertis's second expedition to the Fly left Cape York on 18 May 1876, in the *Neva*, a ten-ton steam pinnace, fifty-two feet in length.

Aboard her were D'Albertis, Hargrave, and Clarrie Wilcox: "a youth of seventeen, whom I had engaged as assistant collector".

There were also seven motley coloured men—Palmer and Jackson, West Indian negroes; Bob, a Fijian; Tom, a Filipino; John, a Sandwich Islander; Johnny, a New Caledonian; and Tientsin, a Chinese cook.

The weight of the ten men and stores, added to the heavy steam engine, burdened the *Neva* below the plimsoll: she was only six inches clear of the water amidships. She had neither deck nor cabin, but was covered with a zinc canopy to keep out rain and sun—but not the mosquitoes.

The armament of this gunboat to penetrate the land of the

howling hordes of Fly River cannibals consisted of one rifle, nine shot-guns, four revolvers, with dynamite for fishing and sky-rockets for frightening away night attackers.

Crossing Torres Strait the *Neva* arrived at Kiwai Island, the largest of the islands in the Fly River estuary, on 23 May. Here D'Albertis bought a pig "for which fate had reserved the honour of death by a bullet, to the great wonder and fear of the natives, who for the first time witnessed the murderous power of our firearms".

Eight days later the *Neva* reached Ellengowan Island. "And here," says D'Albertis, "we at last find ourselves in a country which the white man has not hitherto invaded."

For a fortnight the neophytes of the never-never chugged ever farther up the mighty stream in the land of taboo, hoodoo, voodoo—and ballyhoo; eating cassowaries and coco-nuts, collecting pythons and parrots, and measuring dolichocephalic and brachycephalic skulls.

On 14 June the torrid jungle environment awoke slumbering racial instincts in the brachycephalic craniums of Palmer and Jackson, the West Indian deckhands of the *Neva's* crew. Slash, bang, slatherandwack—the negroes fought furiously, and Palmer hammered Jackson's skull on the *Neva's* floorboards. Then "Jackson, furious as a dog, got one of Palmer's hands between his teeth, and bit it through".

D'Albertis stopped the fight and put Jackson in irons. Then peace reigned again as the *Neva* chugged up-river, annoyed by bees and gnats while the leader botanized on the banks "in semi-Adamite costume" until the leeches made him realize that Adamite nudism was sinful—and painful.

On 17 June D'Albertis glimpsed the lofty mountains to the north where the Fly River rises: "We are still far from these Papuan Alps," he diarizes. "I feel like Moses in sight of the Promised Land."

The modern Moses climbed a hill 250 feet high: "I could perfectly distinguish the high mountain chain, and remained for a long time ecstatically contemplating those lofty summits." The patriotic Italian "named this range after the King of Italy, Victor Emanuel"—and it is so named to this day.

Plugging and chugging along, day after day, the skipper of the *Neva* collected "two perfect specimens of *Paradisaea raggiana*"—the Papuan Bird of Paradise. D'Albertis had discovered and named this new species at Orangerie Bay in eastern Papua on

9 January 1873, when he said, "I propose calling it after an old and true friend of mine, the Marquis Raggi of Genoa, a most ardent sportsman and zoologist."

The gathering of knowledge was Signor D'Albertis's main objective in his wanderings through New Guinea from 1872 to 1877, and he brought back to civilization hundreds of rare botanical and zoological specimens for sale and presentation to the museums of the world.

The most spectacular of his discoveries was the *Paradisea raggiana*, a relative of the crow and rifle-bird family, which inhabits only New Guinea, North Australia and some adjoining isles. This strange and wonderful bird runs to excessive plumage in the male, but the female of the species is a plain plumaged hen, who can hide from enemies at nesting-time, while the gaudy male attracts attention—and arrows—to himself.

Modern men in their drab duds toil at desks from nine to five, while the gaudy female of the human species disregards the warning of nature and attires herself in brilliant plumage, with platinum hair, carmined lips, rouged cheeks, mascara eyelids, crimson digits, rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes—ready to attract the darts of the hunter.

What a come-down from the days of King Charles, when the gallant cavaliers wore the plumage and velvetene, to present day serges and sackcloths of pen-pushing clerks!

For female adornment, many a harmless creature of the wilds has gasped in dying agony from the gunshot of the hunter. The sables and ermines of frozen Siberia, and the plumes of egrets and birds of paradise of torrid New Guinea are ravaged by merciless hunters so that queens, princesses, duchesses, countesses, baronesses, viscountesses, and commercial heiresses may glitter in ballrooms and staterooms like the male birds of the jungle, while kings, princes, dukes, earls, barons and viscounts mingle with waiters in monotonous magpie garb, camouflaged like a female *raggiana* on the nest.

New Guinea, the fabulous isle of gold, was a paradise for bird-of-paradise shooters in the decades that followed the scientific expeditions of D'Albertis. Indiscriminate slaughter of the wonder birds led to an outcry against these plunderers of paradise lost, and legislation has been enacted throughout Papua, British and Dutch New Guinea, forbidding the destruction of these wonder birds and providing severe penalties for the export of their gorgeous plumage.

Let us now return to D'Albertis and his motley crew chugging up the Fly in the *Neva* in June 1875. On 19 June he came to a junction and took the right-hand stream. This is now known as the Palmer River, and the left-hand stream is mapped as the Fly. The *Neva* nosed on, and on 23 June came to another junction, and "followed the right-hand stream, as it appeared the widest". He was still in the Palmer; the left-hand stream is now known as the Tully.

Two days later, on 25 June, the *Neva* grounded on a bank of pebbles, at a point approximately 580 miles from the mouth of the Fly. D'Albertis had reached his journey's end. The river subsided leaving the launch high and dry like the Ark on Ararat. Desperate indeed was the position of the riparian roamers, sickened by fever, their food exhausted, their ship stranded in a land of cannibals, nearly a thousand miles from the nearest white settlements at Cape York and Port Moresby.

But Providence protected the virtuous. Heavy night rain fell on 28 June, putting a freshet into the river, which floated the *Neva* off her pebbly bank. Dauntless D'Albertis "gave orders to proceed and to try the passage again". But engineer Hargrave certified that the *Neva* could not proceed farther up the Fly River, as the channel was too narrow. After thirty-six days of plugging upstream, the nose of the pinnacle was turned for home, and "a tremendous current bore us along at a speed which I may call frightful".

Skimming like a goura pigeon over the turgid waters, the brave little ship pulled up with a jerk on 30 June at a confluence of streams near Snake Point, so named on the upward journey, because "the Chinese cook caught sight of a fine serpent", which the explorer captured and kept alive in his dilly-box to scare the light-fingered members of his crew from stealing tobacco.

No wonder they were scared; the fine serpent was a python seven feet long. The crew nearly mutinied when their skipper, instead of skimming homewards, gave orders on 1 July to enter the tributary and explore it, as they were homesick as well as Fly-sick.

For five days the Nevans collected strange birds and rheumatic pains in this new stream which D'Albertis named the Alice River, after Miss Alice Hargrave, a "fair friend of Sir John Robertson, Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, to whom

I am indebted for obtaining from the Governor the grant of the *Neva*".

Alice was Engineer Lawrence Hargrave's sister. Both were the children of Judge Hargrave, a close friend of "Free-Selection-Before-Survey" Robertson.

Once again they were Fly wrecked, as "a crash warned us that we had stuck on a bank of stones". This time Luigi Maria D'Albertis had had enough of playing *da capo al fine* in his Fly fantasia, and gave the order "*a casa, a casa, Amici*". So homeward went the *Neva*. But not until Laurie Hargrave had certified in the log: "Signor D'Albertis asked me if I could steam further; I said NO."

Ten days later, on 17 July, the watery wanderers were back at Kiwai Island at the mouth of the Fly, their saga of the stream ended. For fifty-five days they had sweated and shivered, struck by sun and smitten by fever, nibbled by gnats and coveted by cannibals, as they revealed a water-path inland, proving that the Fly River is navigable by a steam-launch for nearly 600 miles from its estuary.

The enthusiastic Italian returned laden with trophies of the chase: rare birds, insects, plants of new species and genera to astonish the sophisticated scientists of a civilized world.

The three white men and their coloured rouseabouts had accomplished a tremendous feat of exploration. They had explored the largest river in Australasia—and one of the largest in the world.

Neva-Say-Die D'Albertis gave it another Fly in the *Neva* in the following year, 1877. With a white engineer, Mr C. Preston, and a crew of five Chinamen and three Polynesians, he left Cape York on 29 April and steamed up the Fly River beyond the Alice Junction, assiduously collecting flora, fauna, and fever for five months.

D'Albertis was no hard-hearted scientist. When he shot a *Paradisea raggiana* he soulfully mused: "Poor bird! It greeted the sun for the last time. I saw it making its morning toilet, shaking the dew from its feathers, and preening them with its beak one by one. I never should have tired admiring the beautiful creature, but a noise might have made it fly away, so I had to shoot it at once. In less than a second, the shot was fired, the crime committed, and the lovely bird dead at my feet. An hour after death, the colour of its feathers was less bright."

An equally sad fate overtook the five Chinamen aboard the *Neva*. Ah Chong was lost in the jungle and never returned. Ah Tong died of sunstroke. The other three Ahs—Ah Ou, Ah Men, and Ah Sam—vamoosed in the *Neva's* dinghy on 24 September to attempt a 500-mile cruise on the bosom of the flooded Fly, away from the land accursed.

D'Albertis got steam up and pursued the dinghy, the *Neva's* funnel belching smoke. A month later he found the dinghy beached near a cannibal village. But Ah! Ah! Ah!

Ah Sam, Ah Ou, and Ah Men were no more; only an inedible shirt remained to tell the tragic tale.

On 21 November 1877, his thirty-sixth birthday, D'Albertis was back at the mouth of the Fly River after exactly six months spent in its inmost recesses. He pessimistically reflected: "Thirty-five years have passed like lightning, and with them ambitions and illusions."

The ageing explorer celebrated his birthday by gorging on dynamited fish, but the fish were poisoned and he was Fly-blown with colic next day. Thus ended the three amazing expeditions of Luigi Maria D'Albertis, the father of the Fly.

## CHAPTER IX

WE left Captain Blackwood on H.M.S. *Fly* discovering the mouth of a large river, on 29 April 1845. The *Fly* buzzed on northwards until 6 May, noting more river waters and canoeists. Then dirty weather came up, so Blackwood put about and anchored among the egg and spinach of Bramble Cay.

Next day he stood again to the northwards across the Gulf of Papua, and on 9 May saw a hill, which he named Aird's Hill, after a Lieutenant of the *Fly*.

This 1270-foot-high landmark for seafarers is in the delta of the River Kikori. Standing in towards the shore, the skipper launched the gig, and one of his men waded ashore watched by the savages of the delta: "As soon as they saw that his body was white, they seemed struck with horror, and after a ghastly stare, fled into the bush."

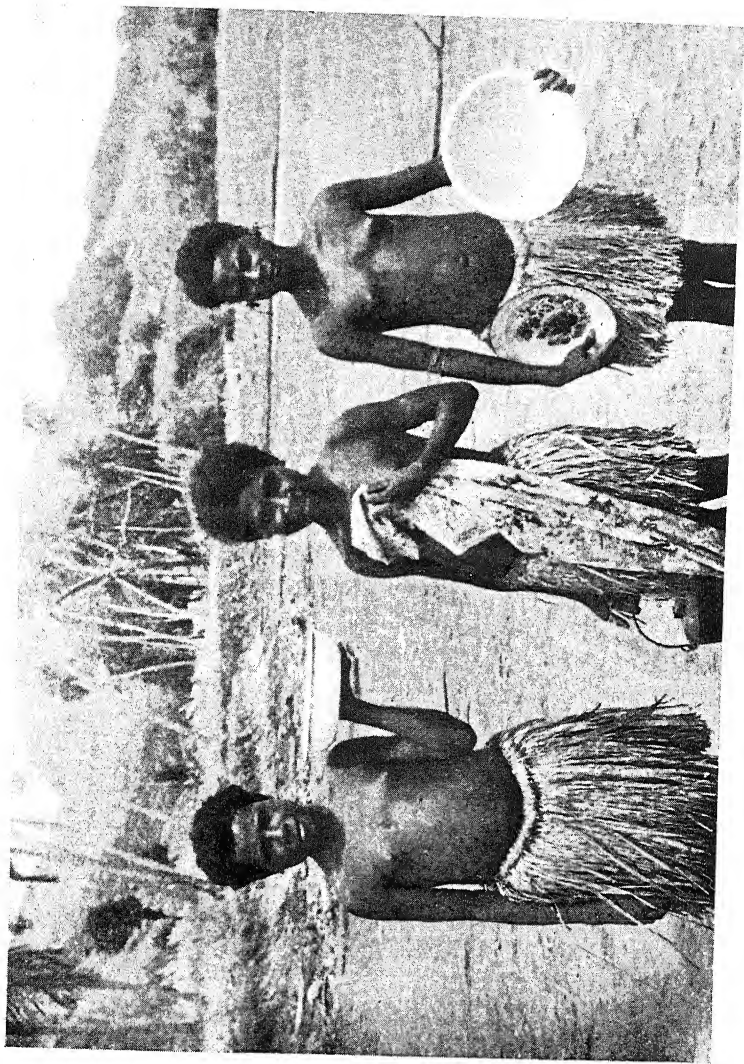
The *Fly* anchored in the estuary near Blackwood's Point, while Captain Blackwood, Naturalist Jukes, and a party of seamen cruised fifteen miles up the river in the gig, as far as latitude 7 degrees 35 minutes, near Aird's Hill, potting holes with muskets in the canoes of savages who attacked them. The humorist cartographer noted the name of one of the villages as "Pigville", a romantically appropriate name.

Then the *Fly* flew back to Bramble Cay, and out of our story.

Seven months later, on 21 December 1845, Her Majesty's schooner *Bramble*, commanded by Lieutenant Charles Yule, set sail from Sydney accompanied by Her Majesty's schooner *Castlereagh*, commanded by Lieutenant Aird.

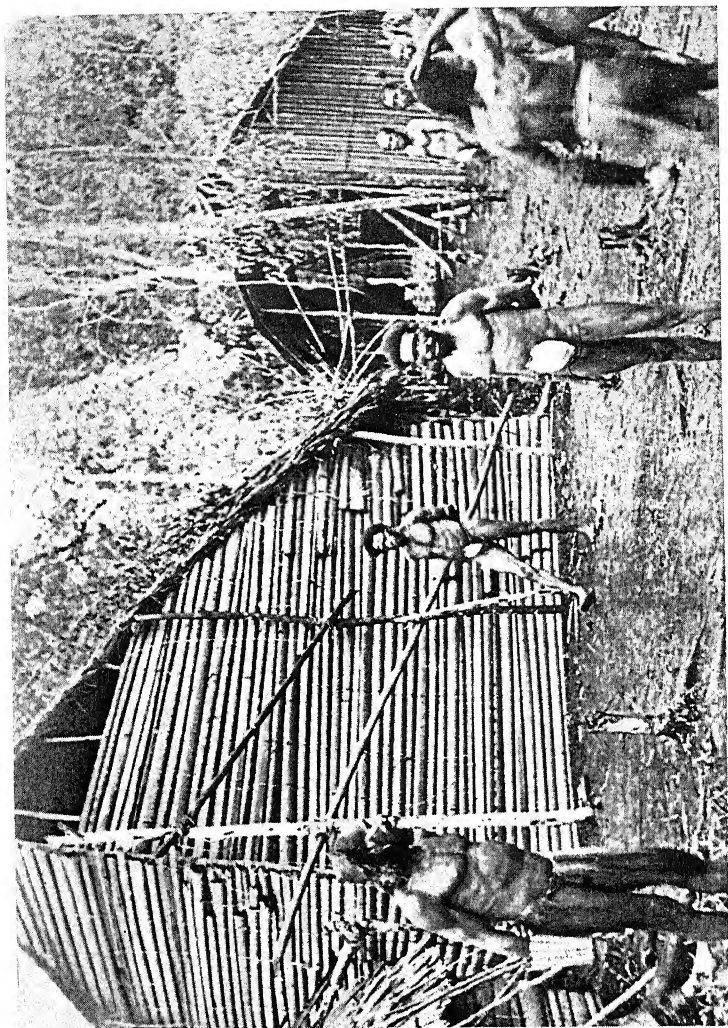
Both these officers had been with Captain Blackwood in the Papuan Gulf. They were now charged with the duty of continuing the survey of the Papuan coast eastward from the Kikori delta. Aboard the *Bramble* was John Sweatman, clerk, whose unpublished journal is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. It is the only extant narrative of this important expedition.

The two schooners left Bramble Cay on 9 April 1846. Cynical



OLAPU BEACH. PORT OF APINAUPI OIL-FIELD





HEAD-HUNTERS OF THE UPPER FLY RIVER

Sweatman had made up his mind to be miserable, and "anticipated no very pleasant cruise" as he thought that Skipper Charles Yule would be too timid to sail up rivers, or land on the coast. "We shall probably be as ignorant of the inhabitants and production of the country on leaving as we were before going there," he moaned.

For a good start Lieutenant Yule anchored five miles off shore, well out of bowshot, and well off their course. Their instructions had been to connect their triangulation at Aird's Hill, but a swift current had swung them twenty miles to the east. Yule then decided to run still farther east, and fix a convenient spot to land and take observations. So they ran along the coast eastwards for three days till they sighted a peculiarly shaped peak, 12,452 feet above the sea, "which we named Mount Victoria".

It was a loyal, but not original, piece of nomenclature, as the name of Victoria the Great is fastened on to features all over the map of the globe.

Cautious Charles Yule, who was jeered at by his juniors for being too timid to land, now looked for a place to put a party ashore for trigonometrical triangulation. He selected for this purpose a small bay near a bluff headland. A quarter of a mile from the cape, around the corner out of sight, was a native village. A stiff surf was breaking on the beach of the bay.

The *Bramble* was anchored three miles from the shore. The *Castlereagh* stood on and off to protect the landing party, but drifted to leeward, six miles, after vainly trying to beat against the land breeze. Two boats put off from the *Bramble* each with two officers and six sailors "all well armed and prepared for hostilities".

Nearing the breakers, timid Yule was unwilling to land because of the danger of being capset, but his juniors soothed him on "from the thought of how we should be ridiculed if we were to go off without landing"

One boat was anchored outside the surf, and the other with Yule aboard backed through long continuous rollers breaking on soft black sand, where they had to jump overboard and wade ashore.

Lieutenant Yule's first thought on landing was to take possession, but "we found the Union Jack had been forgotten and made a substitute by pencilling a flag, on the leaf of a note book. This being attached to a tree, Mr Yule took possession in the

name of Her Majesty, the people giving three very low cheers, lest too much noise should attract the natives”.

The place where this possession by *pianissimo* took place is now named Cape Possession, near present day Apinaipi Oil-fields, east of Port Moresby.

But the cheers were not low enough. They reached black ears. Meanwhile Commander Yule finished his observations by mid-day, and then the party attempted to return through the heavy surf, but the boat broached, was swamped, and all the valuable instruments together with the muskets and ammunition were dunked in the breakers.

The second boat stood impotently outside the breaking surf unable to rescue the stranded possessors of Papua, who remained defenceless on the shore. Up came the *Castlereagh*, and sent two boats to the rescue, but they also were daunted by the surf. Then the *Castlereagh's* cutter dashed in, was swamped, and added an officer and four men to the unarmed beachcombers, who now numbered fifteen.

Suddenly around the corner came the dinkum possessors, “a party of forty natives armed with spears, clubs, bows and axes”.

Quick thinking Lieutenant Yule waved a green branch and danced a sailors’ hornpipe to show his peaceful intentions. Astounded, but not dumbfounded, one of the Papuan braves embraced the hornpiper—“and in a few minutes we were all mixed together”.

This friendliness gave way to derision as reinforcements arrived, and the natives realized that their friendly white visitors were unarmed and prisoners of the surf. They felt and fisted their guests, to see if they were fat enough for eating. Says Johnny Sweatman: “The sun was fast sinking. We saw him we thought for the last time, for we knew that as soon as he was below the horizon the work of death would begin.”

But Johnny had sweated too soon. As the sun went down the surf went down and one of the *Bramble's* boats was veered safely through the surf. She made two rescue trips to the beach while Commander Yule stayed gamely among the cannibals in the best traditions of the Royal Navy for the third and last trip.

The foiled natives, seeing their dinner escaping, “became more and more violent and rapacious”. They stole the Lieutenant’s Quintant, Chronometer and Micrometer and stripped him and Pollard to the skin. Naked and instrumentless, the heroes of Cape Possession swam to the rescue boat, and reached the *Bramble*

at sunset, having lost everything—including their nautical observations.

So New Guinea became a possession of Her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria, on 16 April 1846. But whether the stripping savages left the notepaper Union Jack pinned to the tree, or whether they treasured it in their archives, history does not relate.

Lieutenant Yule triangulated his way north-westward along the coast from Cape Possession to the *Fly's* farthest at Cape Blackwood, observing the peak now named Mount Yule, 10,046 feet.

Three years later Yule and his *Bramble* were back again on the job of Papuan coastal survey. This time in company with H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, a 28-gun ship commanded by Captain Owen Stanley, which had on board naturalists MacGillivray and T. H. Huxley.

Cautious Owen Stanley kept well away from the coast, viewing the landmarks through a telescope, much to the disappointment of Huxley, who diary-diatribed: "If this is surveying, if this is the process of English Discovery, God defend me from any such elaborate waste of time and opportunity."

But Captain Owen Stanley's name is perpetuated forever in the Owen Stanley Range, the mighty mountain spine which bifurcates the eastern end of Papua. On 19 September 1849 the *Rattlesnake* sighted Mount Astrolabe, and sailing westward: "stood in towards a remarkable headland which afterwards received the name of Redscar Head from the reddish colour of its cliffs".

A week later the *Rattlesnake* anchored thirty miles from Cape Possession and named a large island near by "Yule" after the cove who discovered it.

The *Rattlesnake* sailed away, but poor old standoffish Stanley died in Sydney in March 1850, leaving Lieutenant Yule to succeed him as Commander of the 28-gunner.

The next merry mariner along this coast was Captain John Moresby, R.N., Commander of the paddle-wheel corvette, H.M.S. *Basilisk*, who arrived at Redscar Bay and sighted Owen Stanley Range on 13 February 1873.

Moresby was not a standoffer. He anchored in Redscar Bay, and going ashore in the galley, crossed the bar to enter the

estuary of the river Vanapa, which "seemed to offer a promising waterway to the interior of the island".

Soon he arrived at Redscar village, where he rescued three native Samoan missionaries, the sole survivors of six who had been dumped by the London Missionary Society at Redscar Bay three months previously on 27 November 1872. These were the first Christian Evangelists on the mainland of New Guinea. But Captain Moresby waxed sarcastic at the London Missionary Society for leaving the Samoan Gospellers "alone to fight a losing battle against famine, sickness, want of knowledge of the languages, and the contempt and hostility of fierce Papuan heathen".

The sick soul-savers were saved by the ship's doctor, and were put aboard the *Basilisk* to be taken to Cape York. Then Moresby went on his way exploring in the ship's galley.

Naming the estuary "Galley Reach" he galley-vanted up the river amidst slimy mangroves "with much startling of little red and brown crabs, lizards, snakes and other ugly creatures in their happy homes".

Struggling manfully against the current the galleyites slept at night in an atmosphere thick with mosquitoes, which stung through their clothes "as though we had only been arrayed in the woad of our ancestors". At dawn the woadless, well-stung riparian roamers continued upstream. Then, alas: "in one short mile we were brought to a standstill by a vast accumulation of fallen trees".

Returning to the *Basilisk*, the frustrated Moresby wasted no time in pursuing his potamographic pastimes. On 17 February, he and Lieutenant Mourilyan cruised on a coast-hug eastward, in the cutter and the galley, well armed with a week's provisions. They took the passage between the reef and the beach, inside the line of combers eight miles from shore which had made all their cautious predecessors, from Bougainville to Stanley, keep at telescope distance.

That night, Moresby, Mourilyan, and their merry men supped on a delicious stew of pigeons and slept like princes on a calm moonlight night. Next morning, 18 February 1873, after saying prayers, Moresby climbed a hill 643 feet above the sea: "From thence I could see for miles on either side the reef stretching like a green ribbon, its edge fringed by a line of snow white surf, that looked as soft as down."

At one point the ribbon was broken, and experienced Moresby

guessed that it would be a safe entrance for ships. Behind lay a bay, and Moresby waxed poetic about it: "the whole scene was lovely; the sea was studded with green islets, beautiful bays ran into the land, villages came clustering down to the brink of the calm water and into the shallows, and the rich high land behind, closed in with its wooded hills, was steeped in the glow of the vertical sun."

So Port Moresby, the only safe and snug anchorage on Papua's lengthy coast was discovered. Excited Skipper Moresby next day explored the passage through the reef, and found it "about three-quarters of a mile wide, and bottomless as far as our lines went".

Behind this entrance they found "a deepwater passage leading into a broad sheet of calm water deep enough, nearly everywhere, to float the largest ship". The explorers hastened back to the *Basilisk* at Galley Reach, and on 21 February the skipper conned the corvette through the entrance in the reef and anchored in the land-locked bay. The outer basin he named Port Moresby, and the inner Fairfax Harbour, after the two names of his father Admiral Fairfax Moresby.

So a site was found for a white settlement in Papua with a safe anchorage and a good climate.

Port-finder Moresby paddle-wheeled through the reef, and continued his coast-probing eastward to the end of New Guinea, where he cruised on the Sunday after Easter 1873, into "a clear broad blue channel, two miles wide, leading fair from sea to sea—fit for a fleet to pass through under sail".

His heart was filled with wonder and delight. Ever since the days of D'Entrecasteaux the charts had shown the mainland of New Guinea extending another 130 miles eastward to Cape Deliverance, as the coral reefs had prevented a close approach for sailing vessels, and the multitudinous isles of the Louisiade Archipelago had seemed through telescopes to be parts of the main.

"There and then," says Moresby, "I named it China Strait; the wish being father to the thought that I had found a new highway between Australia and China."

And so he had.

Exultantly the discoverer named Hayter Island, Basilisk Island, and Moresby Island, and then began to feel acquisitive. "I felt that the occupation of the vast island of New Guinea by any foreign maritime power, more especially since the discovery

of the *Basilisk's* harbours, would be a standing menace to Queensland, and my conclusion was, that it was my duty to take formal possession of our discoveries in the name of Her Majesty, such a course might result in annexation, or it might be negatived with easy simplicity, by neglecting to confirm it."

On 24 April 1873 Moresby lopped the crown off a tall coconut tree on the west beach of Hayter Island, and hoisted the Union Jack, while an armed party, heads bared, listened to his proclamation taking possession of the menace to Queensland.

Three hearty cheers were given, very different to the cheers given by Yule's marooned mariners at Cape Possession twenty-seven years previously.

A *feu de joie* was fired and Moresby, the Chief Cheerer, said: "Lads, in honour of what the old *Basilisk* has done we will splice the main brace to-night."

A few natives, little knowing that they had become subjects of the Britannic Queen, got frightened by the firing and cheering, and ran away into the bush.

That night the main brace was spliced with Nelson's blood, and the place of splicing was named Possession Bay.

And so for the third time a British sailor took possession of New Guinea. Hayes at Restoration Bay in 1793, and Yule at Cape Possession in 1846, had both hoisted the flag, but their action had not been confirmed by the poo-bahs, pundits, and politicians, who already had enough worries and wars on their minds without adding the unnumbered hordes of fuzzy-topped cannibals in Pap-Guinea to their demesnes.

But Skipper Moresby was not anxious for the same neglect, and in his book of *Discoveries*, published in London 1876, he eloquently urged annexation, refuting the arguments of the anti-annexationists who claimed that the Empire was already big enough; that the climate was unsuitable for Europeans; that the Papuans are happy and we shouldn't disturb them; and that England already has the largest national debt, and should not incur extra Imperial responsibilities.

"Woe to the nation that palters with its conscience!" quoth Moresby. "We are as truly curators of the inheritance of coming generations, as we are heirs of the past." He pointed out that most of Australia is arid, while there is plenty of moisture in New Guinea in its fruitful well-watered tracts of territory, and claimed that the climate of the terrain he had provisionally possessed was quite healthy for Englishmen.

As for the natives, he urged: "we should be bound to labour in the direction of Christianizing, and making them law-abiding and also should put down lawless English ruffianism and native reprisals with a strong hand."

"Nature herself," he perorates, "has striven to show us that she has here laid down the noble proportions of an Empire, and bids us not curtail it for our children."

Skipper Moresby's eloquence fell on deaf ears, as the ruling faction in England thought that colonies were only millstones around their middles.

While Downing Street drowsed, Pump Court got busy. Francis P. Labilliere, a live-wire Australian-born barrister, wrote to the Earl of Carnarvon on 26 March 1874, urging that the possession-taking by Yule and Moresby should be confirmed by the Imperial Government in an act of annexation. "This," he urged, "would be the best hope for Papuans in the future, and also for British interests. We are strong in the Australian waters, because no other Power has Dominions contiguous to our own."

Labilliere made the revolutionary suggestion that one of the Australian colonies should undertake the management of New Guinea in order to "strengthen the outposts of the Empire, and at the same time add a valuable jewel to its crown".

This roused a hornet's nest, as the Colonial Office circularized the Governors of the Seven Australasian Colonies with a copy of Labilliere's proposition.

Sir John Ferguson of New Zealand said it was a matter for Australia.

Governor Weld of Western Australia was in favour of annexation, because "if we do not interfere outrages on the Aborigines will ensue".

Governor Bowen of Victoria was an anti. He approved of Lord Derby's statement that "Great Britain has already black subjects enough".

Governor Sir Hercules Robinson of New South Wales also approved of Derby's dictum, but reported that Mr Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales was "in favour of colonization by an Australian Company".

Governor Cairns of Brisbane reported that the Queensland executive opinion was favourable to annexation. And added: "I hold that to Queensland especially the establishment of any



foreign authority upon her water frontier would be a permanent disaster."

Then, on 29 April 1875, the Royal Colonial Institute weighed in with a petition, urging that "the shores of this island should be added to the Empire without delay".

The Government of New South Wales followed with a memo urging that Great Britain should take possession, not only of New Guinea, but also of New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomons, the Louisiades, the New Hebrides, the Marshall, Gilbert, and Ellice Islands. "Thus the Colonial Empire of Great Britain would be enlarged and consolidated, and her beneficent rule extended over all the waters of the Pacific."

With this went a petition from citizens of Sydney, led by Dr John Dunmore Lang, who at a cordial public meeting urged Britain to get a move on, and facilitate the annexation.

Governor Musgrave of South Australia supported the idea that Queensland should take responsibility for administration.

Then a New Guinea Colonizing Association got busy in London proposing to sell shares in a South Sea Bubble to attract shareholders.

All went as merry as a marriage bell up to this stage. Then, on 17 November 1875, just as Downing Street had made up its mind to get a move on, a deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society, supported by the London Missionary Society, waited on the Earl of Carnarvon, protesting against "anything which must seem to lead to the revival of the labour trade" pointing out that no large Imperial interests were involved, and urging no annexation.

These arguments carried weight. On 8 December 1875, the Earl of Carnarvon pontificated that there was no need to come to a hasty decision, as there was no danger of the annexation of New Guinea by any foreign power.

Carnarvon also kiboshed the prospectus of the New Guinea Colonizing Association, which he stated had no authority to sell lands in the territory which had not been annexed.

That knocked the annexationists flat—but not for long.

Behind all the petitions (pros and cons), dispatches and manoeuvres of the Colonial Government and the Colonial Office a battle was proceeding for the soul of Papua, between black-birders anxious to capture bodies and missionaries anxious to capture souls.

The sugar-planters of Queensland, in need of cheap labour, had slave-ships scouring the isles of Polynesia and the coasts of Papua for human cargo.

On its way up the Queensland coast in January 1873, prior to the discovery of Port Moresby, H.M.S. *Basilisk* kept a sharp lookout for blackbirding schooners whose activities had become illegal under Queensland's Kidnapping Act of 1872.

The *Basilisk* captured four slave schooners: the *Melaine*, the *Challenge*, the *Woodbine*, and the *Crishna*, their holds and decks crammed with black cargo. But there was many a loophole in the naval patrol, and blackbirding schooners enticed hundreds of head-hunters from the cannibal villages of the Papuan coast to lop the heads of sugar-cane in Queensland under the promise of a "bokis" of trade goods worth about £1 for seven years' service.

When enticing tactics failed, the kidnappers used force. B. H. Molesworth, in *The History of Kanaka Labour in Queensland*, describes a favourite method:

The recruiting ship having anchored near the beach, out of range of poisoned arrows, articles of trade would be displayed, and native canoes with articles for exchange would put off from the shore. As soon as these were alongside, huge stones shipped for the purpose would be dropped on the sterns of the canoes, upsetting them. The ship's boats were then lowered, and as many of the swimming natives were then dragged into them as could be caught by their woolly hair. These, trembling with fear, were then hoisted on board, and the vessel got under way before an attack of reprisal could be made from the shore.

Once aboard the lugger and the boy is mine, was the kidnappers' chant, and many a cannibal canoeist went for a sea voyage never to return.

This technique was vigorously opposed by the pious pastors of the London Missionary Society. Many a missionary was pin-cushioned by arrows because the suspicious villagers did not appreciate the spiritual intent of visits by missionary schooners.

After the *Basilisk* had rescued the starving unsuccessful Samoan missionaries at Redscar Bay in February 1873, Moresby brought the survivors back to Cape York, and mentioned to the London Missionary Society that he had discovered a good anchorage at Port Moresby.

Always interested in a new field, the London Missionary Society, in November 1873, sent four Samoan teachers to Port

Moresby to preach the Glad Tidings of Christianity to the fuzzy-tops of the large native villages of Hanuabada and Elevara in that Port.

These Papuan proselytizers—Ruatoka, Anederea, Rau, and Heneri—established the first successful Christian Mission on the mainland. In 1874 a white missionary, Rev. W. G. Lawes, arrived in Port Moresby and established a Mission House midway between the two native villages to continue the work of the Samoan forerunners, in teaching the rudiments of religion. But sadly the Rev. Lawes refers to the heathens of Hanuabada. Says he: "Of course they can only have a dim conception of the object of our mission, for teachers have only been a year with them, and no one has yet shown any disposition to embrace Christianity."

Haul of souls—nil. Two years later "the attendance at services is smaller, the spirit of inquiry less active".

While the missionaries were missionizing, Signor D'Albertis was D'Albertizing at Yule Island, where he landed on 16 March 1875 and established a collecting depot. He was conveyed from Thursday Island to the Papuan perimeter by Captain Redlich, a German mother-of-pearl fisher—and blackbirder—in the cutter *Ida*.

For several months D'Albertis prowled in Papua, roaming along the Saint Joseph River towards Mount Yule with only a small party. The ingenious Italian relied on magic to make the cannibals of the Roro tribe respect him.

He was as full of tricks as a cus-cus is of fleas. One stunt was to light some methylated spirits and then threaten to set the sea on fire. Another, was to plant dynamite mines connected by a hidden train of gunpowder, light the train, then make magical passes with his hands in the direction of the hidden mine until it exploded. This soon got him the reputation of being "Big Fellow Sorcerer Number One". Tribesmen came from far and near to try their spears on a sheet of galvanized iron exhibited by D'Albertis. After their spears were blunted, the magician would fire a bullet through the iron and dumbfound the sceptics of the Saint Joseph. He combined bluff and bluster with steel nerves as he botanized in the jungle amid hordes of hungry head-hunters.

One day a savage accused the Italian of cowardice, because he covered his breast with a cloth, which to the savages looked like a protection against spears.

Impulsively whipping off his tunic the prestige-proud scientist stood with bared breast—hiding his revolver behind his back, half-cocked—and dared the doubter to hurl a spear.

Says D'Albertis: "He was afraid to prove his spear against me, so spared me the necessity of proving my revolver."

Another time D'Albertis poured some essence of aniseed in a saucer, lit it, then pretending to swallow the flame blew it out, and smacked his chest saying: "He who can swallow fire has no dread of your spears."

The reason for this prestidigitating pantomime of pale-face pourri-pourri was to make the natives keep away from him, particularly when he was sleeping: "Make them believe you are something more than they," advises the canny collector. "Make them as much afraid of you sleeping as waking. In a word, inspire them with a wholesome dread of approaching you at all."

The Italian collector of Coleoptera, secure in his legend of invulnerability, made a great haul of museum rarities, and had nearly finished his work when rival collectors lobbed on the scene. It was the barque *Chevert* with the Macleay expedition on board newly arrived from the Katau River.

They were looking for mammals, molluscs and megapods, but Signor D'Albertis got rather peeved at the high prices paid by the *Chevert* trespassers, which were three times more than the Italian usually paid. The ship's surgeon, "Dr James, a young American of pleasant manners", visited D'Albertis, and admired his collection so much that he decided to return.

Away sailed the *Chevert* on 3 September 1875, firing a salute of two guns. Jealous D'Albertis replied "by exploding a tin box of dynamite, which made more noise than the guns".

Two months later the mission steamer *Ellengowan* arrived at Yule Island, bringing back the American Dr James, who had the collecting bug since meeting D'Albertis.

With him was a companion, Carl Thorngren. But D'Albertis no longer objected to rivals as his chests were full of specimens. He departed on 8 November, leaving a magical reputation, amidst much lamentations of the Papuan belles who had shown themselves "very well disposed" towards him.

Italian gentlemen prefer—brunettes.

The new collectors James and Thorngren lacked the histrionic talent of the volatile Italian, and did not take precautions to foster a legend of the impenetrability of their torsos to spears.

For ten months they prowled in the valley of the Roro tribe, and along the rivers and creeks. They had a cutter, the *Mayri*, for their estuarine meanderings. The savages of the mainland soon observed that the casual American was not as awesome as his declamatory Italian predecessor. The sceptical heathen debated among themselves, whether the epidermis of all white men would turn aside spears as D'Albertis claimed.

Then something happened which showed them that white men are not masters of their own magic. The pearling cutter *Ida*, commanded by Captain Redlich, cast anchor in Hall Sound one day in April 1876.

Skipper Redlich was a pioneer of Papua, who cruised along the coasts of the gulf and Torres Strait in search of sea-slugs—and adventure. It was he who brought D'Albertis to Yule Island in March 1875, so he knew all about the Italian's tricks to terrify with dynamite.

While the *Ida* was anchored near the *Mayri* the missionary steamer *Ellengowan* arrived and Hall Sound was full of shipping, as the white visitors proceeded with their various businesses of collecting souls, sea-slugs and specimens.

Dr James of the *Mayri* and missionaries Mr MacFarlane and Dr Turner of the *Ellengowan* were ashore while Captain Redlich lazed on the deck of the *Ida* cogitating about sea-slugs.

Suddenly the German saw a school of fish across the bay, and jumping into a dinghy with a native boy as oarsman, he rowed stealthily towards his prey, a plug of dynamite in one hand and a box of matches in the other. Just as he lit the fuse ready to throw the charge the fish dived, and Redlich waited for them to reappear. But he waited too long. There was a blinding flash and a terrific explosion as the dynamite detonated in Redlich's hand, blood spouting from the shattered limb.

Says Missionary MacFarlane: "We were on our way back when we heard the report of the dynamite and the shriek from Captain Redlich. The native pulled quickly to the *Ellengowan* where the injured man was taken on board by Captain Runcie. We also hastened on board, where we were met by the horrible sight of his shattered stump."

Immediately Doctor Turner operated, cutting away the shreds of flesh and bone and the one-armed sailor was taken to Port Moresby for further treatment.

Far and wide among the savages of the Saint Joseph spread

the story of the maiming, and in many a hutted village the sorcerers said that white men could be injured just the same as black. Meanwhile Dr James and Mr Thorngren continued their botanical collecting unaware of a rising tide of hatred.

On 20 August 1876, while their cutter *Mayri* was anchored in Hall Sound, at Yule Island, two canoes approached from the mainland full of fighting men, with clubs and spears lying in the bottom of the canoes partly covered by yams.

The native crew of the cutter spotted the hidden weapons and warned their white masters to beware. But James and Thorngren with tropic lassitude neglected to have their rifles handy, and carelessly started bartering.

Suddenly the Chief of the Roros picked up a club and smashed it on the skull of the doctor, who staggered to the rigging, drew his revolver and shot the chief dead. Almost at the same moment a spear thrown by another savage pierced Dr James's throat and his life blood stained the mainsail of the *Mayri*.

Meanwhile other natives seized Mr Thorngren and pulled him overboard into the cannibal canoe, where he started wrestling. But the odds were against him as with a spear through his side he fell into the water and instantly sank. The native crew of the cutter, loyal to their murdered masters, joined in the mêlée on the *Mayri* and three of them were wounded by spears.

The rest drove off the attack with rifle-fire; then stood out to sea with the dead body of Dr James, leaving poor Carl Thorngren at the bottom of Hall Sound. Then they made for the Mission Station on Yule Island, where the London Missionary Society, early in 1876, had established two Samoan teachers, Waunaea and Anederea.

There the *Mayri* was found on 15 September by Captain Runcie, the skipper of the *Ellengowan*. He also found the native teachers of Yule Island in great danger. They said: "A powerful tribe on the mainland are coming to kill us all because Dr James has shot their chief."

The terrified teachers were taken away in the *Ellengowan*. Yule Island was abandoned as a mission station until the bearded fathers of the Sacred Heart reclaimed it for Christ nine years later.

But poor old Waunaea, who dodged the spears of the Roro, could not survive the malarial miasmas of the Baxter River, where he died soon after of fever.

Despite the murder of James and Thorngren in 1876, collectors and missionaries were not prevented by the tragedy from continuing their Papuan specimen gathering. In May 1877 a party of four collectors—Alexander Morton, Andrew Goldie, W. Blunden, and J. H. Shaw—left Sydney by steamer for Cape York where they purchased an eight-ton lugger the *Explorer*. On 4 July they set sail across the Gulf of Papua, and six days later reached Port Moresby, where the Rev. William Lawes placed a house at their disposal.

A week later the party went inland for twelve miles and camped on the Laloki River, "a swift running stream of some magnitude". Morton remained here collecting specimens for the Sydney Museum, while Goldie and Shaw returned to Port Moresby and cruised in the *Explorer* to Bootless Inlet, twenty miles east.

From here the collectors "pushed inland to the territory of the dreaded mountaineers—the Koitapus". They pitched their camp by the banks of a stream "whose waters fall in a series of gigantic leaps from the summit of the lofty and precipitous range".

This camp was at Rona Falls, at the foot of Mount Astrolabe. After collecting specimens for a fortnight Shaw "succeeded in ascending the highest point of the range 3860 feet above sea-level".

Hats off to Shaw, and his mate Jack the kanaka, for this pioneer penetration of Papua. Returned to Port Moresby, Goldie and Shaw rejoined Morton at Laloki River which they followed upstream seven miles then pitched camp "near the junction of an important tributary". Now they were in a collectors' paradise, and "some fine examples of the King Bird of Paradise was secured".

More important still they "obtained flaky colours of gold" from the drift and gravelly deposits in the banks of the river and also quartz specimens. "This is beyond doubt the first instance in which the precious metal has been obtained in New Guinea." Appropriately the stream was named the "Goldie River".

The satisfied collectors returned to Sydney with their curiosa and quartz, submitting the examples to the Government Geologist, "the result of whose assay placed the truth of the discovery beyond question". So the ancient isle of gold at last lived up to its name, and rapidly the rumour ran round the ever-hopeful haunts of prospectors.

Goldie had remained in Port Moresby collecting specimens for London taxidermists. His non-return gave wings to the rumour that he was sluicing a fortune from the gravelly deposits of the stream named after himself. Where there's gold there's rushes and the lure of the magnetic midas metal soon drew a bevy of fortune-questers to equip a prospecting party for the hazardous trip to the land of cannibals.

On 25 March 1878 Captain Borstelle, in the schooner *Colonist* (109 tons), cleared from Sydney with seventeen gold-diggers and Mining Warden J. Hanran *en route* for the Goldie Golconda. Others followed in the *Swan*, *Economist*, *Pride of the Logan*, *Emily* and *Hibernia*.

Some of the parties brought horses with them and soon there was a tent town on the banks of the Goldie and Laloki rivers, as the clang of axe and ring of pick frightened away the birds of paradise. But the diggers were two months too early as the rivers were still flooded from the rains pouring over the mountains.

The first arrivals from the *Colonist* and *Swan* left Port Moresby, thirty strong, on 1 May, and crossing the Laloki River twelve miles away followed the left bank of the Goldie River, trying to trace the gold colour to its source.

Seventeen miles from Port Moresby they cut a track through the scrub, and made camp twenty-four miles from the Port. A light party then proceeded on foot forty miles farther upstream, and "found the colour everywhere in the bed of the river, but never in the gullies". Plenty of colour, but no nuggets. So the still hopeful diggers organized a stronger party led by Frank Jones. This started from camp on 28 June with two horses, and penetrated twenty miles beyond Rona Falls on to the tableland.

They returned after thirty-two days' arduous struggles against nature and mosquitoes still with plenty of colours and no nuggets. Meanwhile more miners were arriving, and more were going down goldless with malaria.

There was still no authority in British New Guinea, except the dictatorship of Mining Warden Hanran, as the British Government had refused to ratify Captain Moresby's Act of Annexation in 1873. Men were dying, fighting, buying land from natives for tomahawks, and all the time there was no red-tape to tie them up in the sacred name of law and order because New Guinea was a No-Man's Land.

Early in July 1878 the Queensland Government appointed



Magistrate Chester as a Judicial Commissioner, to report on "the doing of the prospectors, and the conditions of the settlement".

Magistrate Chester left Thursday Island and cruised to Port Moresby, where he satisfied himself that the diggers were "a most respectable class of men, and their conduct reflects credit on the Colonies from whence they came".

Chester also held an inquiry into the death of "a Mr Neville, a gentleman of independent means", who died of sunstroke returning from Laloki. "Poor fellow," says the humane magistrate. "He was found lying dead on the track among the long grass about three and a half miles from the Port. He was a general favourite."

But still the diggers persisted. In August a party of fifteen left the camp on the Goldie River, and steered north across very rough country till they discovered another river "seventy miles from the Laloki". There they camped.

On 24 August, while fording the new river, "Peter Brown, an original 'Colonist' man, heedless of advice, tried to swim the river." . . . "Alas," as one of his comrades reported, "he went to the long home from which the explorer can never return. Two days later we found his body floating in the water. In sadness and in sorrow we buried him on the bank of that lonely stream which will forever bear his name."

So the Brown River, a prosaic colourful name, commemorates the adventurous spirit of a pioneer of Papua.

Still no gold was found. So the diggers gradually drifted away in schooners and luggers as diggers have drifted from many a field of forlorn hope. But this first attempt at settlement makes the gold-rush of the Goldie the authentic starting-point of Papuan colonization. It was a turning-point in the history of the isle of mountains and mystery

The year 1877 was also a turning-point for missionary endeavours in Papua, for in that year the directors of the London Missionary Society instructed the Rev. James Chalmers of Rarotonga, near Tahiti, to proceed to New Guinea in the service of Our Lord.

For twenty-four years thereafter "Tamate" Chalmers was Number One Missioner of Papua. He started his labours by cruising along the coast in the schooner *Bertha*, and in the following year, in the mission steamer *Ellengown*, visited 105 villages.

While Tamate was prowling along the Papuan coast exploring the lie of the mangroves, and listening to the lies of the man-eaters, the Rev. Lawes, at Port Moresby, was studying the Motu language, and painfully preparing a translation of the Gospels. But you can't make a silk shekel holder out of a sow's aural appendage, and you can't de-heathenize a head-hunter without taking risks.

On 7 March 1881 ten native preachers were massacred by the villagers of Kalo at Hood Bay, east of Port Moresby. Among the martyrs was Anederea, one of the original Samoans who had been rescued from Redscar Bay by the *Basilisk* in 1873. He was also one of the foundation quartette of Port Moresby Gospellers.

In the Congregational Calendar, Anederea would be a Saint—if Congregationalists believed in canonizing modern martyrs.

Came 4 April 1883—a red-letter date in the history of Papua. At the mission station, Port Moresby, Reverends Chalmers and Lawes were drinking limes on the veranda, watching the Queensland Government boat from Cape York sail into the inner basin and drop anchor.

Ashore came their old friend Henry Marjoribanks Chester, Police Magistrate of Cape York, who had voyaged with Rev. MacFarlane and Signor D'Albertis on the pioneer expedition up the Fly River in 1875.

"I have been instructed by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, Premier of Queensland, to take possession of New Quinea in the Queen's name!" said Chester.

"This is a bit sudden, isn't it?" said Tamate Chalmers.

It was pretty sudden. Premier Tom had taken the bit in his teeth and bolted. The dilly-dally-delay policy of Derby of Downing Street had got on Queensland's nerves, so Chester's instructions from Brisbane were to annex first and appease afterwards.

The missionaries could not argue the point with the Magistrate, so they loaned him their flagpole for the ceremony he was instructed to perform. The natives were assembled, the flag hauled aloft, a salute was fired from the guns of the anchored cutter, and Magistrate Chester formally took possession in the name of Her Majesty Queen Victoria the one and only.

This ceremony occurred at ten o'clock in the morning "in presence of about 200 natives, and 13 Europeans. A Royal Salute was fired from the *Pearl*, and three cheers were given for Her Majesty", as Chester later reported to his Queensland bosses.

Rev. Lawes explained to the natives the meaning of the ceremony, flag hoisting, and cheers, and finished with a "short impressive prayer", after which "about £50 worth of trade goods were distributed to the heads of families in the name of Her Majesty".

In the afternoon there was a procession of natives, and then Mr Chester handed the Possession Flag to Boe Vagi, head chief of Port Moresby, for safe keeping "until such time as an official should be sent".

That evening the thirteen whites had a banquet to which Boe Vagi and the Samoan teachers were invited, when a hearty toast was drunk to "Prosperity" and "the latest gem added to the British Crown".

In his report Mr Chester describes the progress made since the mission was established. "Too much credit," he says, "can scarcely be given to Mr and Mrs Lawes and Mr Chalmers, for the wonderful results produced among a people who only eight years ago were pure savages."

Chester the Annexer described our new possession very favourably. The population of the two native villages was 800 souls. There were also two neat wooden houses with iron roofs, and a store kept by Andrew Goldie, the retired botanical collector, who had started the abortive gold-rush of the *Colonist* five years previously.

Goldie was also the owner of a mob of horses left behind by the disappointed diggers of 1878. When Magistrate Chester annexed the port on 4 April 1883, he reported that: "the horses have increased to about sixty, and the marvel is that they were not speared long ago."

Farewelling Port Moresby, Chester arrived at Cooktown on 16 April and then telegraphed to McIlwraith that he had done the deed. Chester's chestnuts were in the fire. The *Empire* seethed with excitement at the seizing, and Lord Derby danced his disapproval of the dastardly deed.

But Australia approved, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* orated: "Upon the whole we see no cause for the annoyance which the action of Mr Chester has occasioned in the House of Commons."

Previous takings of possession by Commodore Hayes, 1793, Lieutenant Yule, 1846, and Captain Moresby, 1873, had not been confirmed by the British Government. What would be the fate of Chester's taking possession?

Edward Henry Stanley, fifteenth Earl of Derby, who had often declared that "the Queen has enough black subjects", became Secretary of State for the Colonies in December 1882. He was the man who would have to decide whether Magistrate Chester's taking possession would be confirmed by the British Government—or not.

The Earl was not pleased when he heard that Queensland—a mere colony—had acted imperialistically in acquiring territory off its own bat. He did not mince words as he told Premier Tom that he had exceeded his legal rights, and that Downing Street would not recognize this presumptuous action.

On 11 July 1883 Derby dictated a sarcastic cable to McIlwraith, pointing out that the British Government was satisfied that no foreign power intended to take possession of New Guinea, and that therefore there was no need for Queensland to act in such an important matter "without apparent necessity".

This lordly snub did not satisfy the people of Australia who had unanimously approved of McIlwraith's rash act. Public meetings were held throughout the six colonies in support of Queensland's annexation.

Suspicion was widespread that Earl Derby was playing a deep game by deliberately allowing Prince Bismarck, Iron Chancellor of Germany, to establish a German colony in Australia's Nearest North. The noble Earl had been impressed by Germany's claim for "a place in the sun". He thought that a policy of appeasement would keep Bismarck quiet and divert Germany from making claims to colonies in Africa.

This deep diplomatic game did not appeal to the acquisitive Australians, who considered that the establishment of a German colony in New Guinea would be a permanent threat to Australia's security.

That is why McIlwraith acted and Derby dallied.

Premier Jim Service of Victoria, an ardent supporter of the annexation policy, then convened an inter-colonial conference to discuss the matter. This met in Sydney in November 1883, and passed a resolution that "such steps should be immediately taken as will most conveniently secure the incorporation with the British Empire of that part of New Guinea which is not claimed by the Government of the Netherlands".

While all this excitement was sizzling a Geelong-born youth

named George Ernest Morrison decided to do a bit of peeking and prying in Papua.

In November 1882 Geelong George, who was a medical student then aged twenty, returned from a blackbirding expedition in the South Sea Islands, and transhipped at Cooktown to the schooner *Ellengowan* for a peep at Port Moresby.

He then bunked in a Chinese junk across the Coral Sea, through Torres Strait to Normanton at the foot of the Gulf of Carpentaria, then waltzed his Matilda across Australia, 2000 miles to Geelong, on the Geelong long trail of Burke and Wills. Arrived in Melbourne on 21 April 1883, he was just in time to hear of Chester's annexation.

Heroized for his overland feat, and for his Polynesian peregrinations, student George was engaged by David Syme of the Melbourne *Age* to lead an exploring and reporting expedition to the scene of Chester's flag-wagging.

The rival Melbourne newspaper, the *Argus*, had already dispatched an expedition led by Captain Armit, to penetrate Papua. Newspapers can't bear scoops by rivals, so Syme of the *Age* had picked twenty-one-year-old Ulysses Morrison to outscout and outscot the *Argus's* Armit.

The *Argus* expedition left Port Moresby on 14 July 1883. Captain Armit was assisted by Professor Denton, Messrs Irving, Belford, Hunter, and a mob of carriers. The party's destination was Dyke Acland Bay on the northern side of New Guinea, via the Owen Stanley Range.

Ten days later Morrison's *Age* expedition also left Port Moresby, making for the same destination, but taking a more westerly course. With Leader Morrison went two white men, John Wheeler Lyons and Ned Snow, two Australian abos Dick and Bosen, and eleven Motu carriers. The party also had brumby packhorses tamed by digger Ned Snow from the herd abandoned by the diggers of the *Colonist* in 1878.

Both expeditions failed to reach Dyke Acland Bay, which, although only a hundred miles away, was obstructed by the mighty Owen Stanley Range, which rises to over 12,000 feet. Armit's party returned to Port Moresby on 3 September. Professor Denton had died on the trip, and the rest of the party were in a bad way from fever and exhaustion. Morrison's mission returned on 14 October, hungry, fever-stricken and disheartened, their leader strapped to a horse with spear-wounds in his nose and groin.

So the news-farers of Melbourne got plenty of sensations. But

the Owen Stanley Range remained unconquered. George Ernest Morrison climbed dizzy heights in other parts of the world to become famous as "Chinese" Morrison.

Although Chester's Union Jack was hoisted ceremoniously each day in Port Moresby after 4 April 1883, obstinate Earl Derby did not admit that the Queen owned the place, and the Australian Governments kept on remonstrating with his Earlship and urging him not to treat Papuans as pariahs.

But snootily on 11 July 1883 Derby declared that: "Her Majesty's Government is satisfied that there is no evidence of any foreign power taking possession of any part of New Guinea."

But Australians knew different. On 11 September 1884 the steamer *Samoa*, chartered by Dr Finsch and Captain Dallwann, agents of the German Trading and Plantation Company, left Sydney for the islands of north New Guinea.

This was the electric spark to liven up the British Government. The danger of German annexation was at last recognized to be real. The German Trading Company had a station at Mioko Harbour, in Duke of York Island, on the northern side of New Guinea, near Rabaul, and from there were extending explorations and trading activities to the mainland.

When the *Samoa* left Sydney on 11 September 1884 the Britishers of London at last got busy. They informed the German Ambassador, Von Plessen, that Britain intended to establish a protectorate over New Guinea.

Von Plessen pleaded, and Mr Gladstone's Government appeased by agreeing to limit British annexation to the south coast and islands, leaving Germany a free hand in the north.

Accordingly, Her Majesty's Government instructed Hugh Hastings Romilly, Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific, stationed at Fiji, to proceed in October to Port Moresby and hoist the Union Jack. Guileless Mr Gladstone and discreet Lord Derby did not admit the validity of Queensland's "unauthorized" annexation in April the previous year.

Hugh Hastings Romilly, a devoted son, wrote to his mother on 17 October 1884, aboard H.M.S. *Harrier* at Cooktown: "We sail to-day for New Guinea, I am to have the honour of announcing the British Protectorate. The Cooktown *Independent* calls me 'a pitiful scion of a baronetcy, a relation of a red-tape Downing Street functionary'. The papers continue abusing me, they say I am unfitted by nature to protect white men."

The pitiful scion was unpopular with Queensland kanaka capturers because a few months previously he had annexed, in the city of Brisbane, two white blackbirders at the point of a warship's guns and lugged them back to Fiji for summary justice.

Dubious Hugh told his mother that he was doubtful about the newspaper expeditions of the *Age* and *Argus*. "They stand a good chance of going to fill the Papuan flesh pots" was his opinion. "Morrison does not look good to eat, while Armit deserves to be eaten for writing a book on New Guinea under the name of Lawson, when at that time he had not yet set foot in the country."

So H.M.S. *Harrier* sailed from Cooktown on 17 October with a flag all ready for hoisting.

To make doubly sure, their Lordships of the Admiralty, who had heard that a German warship, the *Elizabeth*, was on the way to New Guinea, instructed Commodore J. E. Erskine, of H.M.S. *Nelson*, flagship on the Australian Station, to proceed with the annexation.

The *Nelson* arrived at Port Moresby on Sunday, 2 November 1884, accompanied by H.M.S. *Espiegle*, H.M.S. *Raven*, and H.M.S. *Swinger*.

On the way the Commodore had been exercising the men of the *Nelson* in firing a *feu de joie*, in anticipation of the annexation. Great was his chagrin to discover H.M.S. *Harrier* already in the harbour, with Mr Deputy Commissioner Romilly on board, who had, in accordance with instructions from Lord Derby, already hoisted the Union Jack, and proclaimed the Protectorate on 23 October.

"I made an ass of myself," confesses Romilly in his letter to his mother. Apparently the Downing Street scion got tangled up in a Downing Street labyrinth of red-tape. The usurping annexer next tells mother a bit of gossip about the skipper of the *Harrier*, who was nicknamed Tubby, because he weighed twenty-two stone: "The natives of New Guinea displayed consternation at his appearance, but finally men came from great distances to beg hairs from his beard, to wave over their yam crops, expecting thereby to vastly increase their size."

Undoubtedly this sympathetic magic increased the sizes of the yams, just in the same way that hoisting the Union Jack increased the size of Queen Victoria's Empire.

Romilly's proclamation, "acting as I thought on my instructions", was the fifth after Hayes, 1793; Yule, 1846; Moresby, 1873; and

Chester, 1883. This, however, did not deter Commodore Erskine of the *Nelson* from doing the doughty deed for the sixth time. Thick-skinned Erskine said that he would regard Romilly's proclamation "solely as a preliminary move" and arranged a feast and grand palaver for Thursday, 6 November.

The day before was an overture. A grand gorge of rice and sugar in tubs was spread aboard the *Nelson* for all the chiefs of the Motus. And Boe Vagi the head chief, dressed in an old red wideawake hat and shirt, was presented with a walking-stick ornamented with a silver ring.

For the amusement of the chiefs, Gatling and Nordenfeldt guns were fired. But the chiefs were not amused—they were frightened.

That night, as the preliminary to the sixth and final annexation of New Guinea, the *Nelson* was illuminated with blue lights, limelights, searchlights, and rockets were fired while the ship's siren was sounded mournfully, making a noise like thousands of wild dogs howling in concert, so that, says Mr Goldie, "the natives all ran away into the bush to hide panic struck".

Came the dawn. Marines and bluejackets were landed in force with a brass band and formed a hollow square.

Boe Vagi, with his shirt and stick, was a conspicuous figure among the naval officers as "the Union Jack was slowly hoisted, the troops presented arms, a *feu de joie* fired, and three cheers were given for the Queen".

The proclamation read by Erskine referred only to "the Southern Shores" of New Guinea; so the appeasers left an open go to *Deutschland über Alles* on the north.

And so for the third time within eighteen months the natives of Hanuabada and Elevara villages were annexed. But they didn't mind, as there was always a feast, with a tomahawk or two, thrown in.

Now the first web of red-tape was woven over Papua, as Commodore Erskine's proclamation announced that the Protectorate was established to prevent occupation of the land "by persons . . . who under the pretence of legitimate trade, might possess themselves of the lands of the native inhabitants".

Storekeeper Goldie, who already had bought a lot of land, waxed sarcastic at this proclamation and "attributed it to the fact of the Commodore being a simple dupe in the hands of the missionaries".

For three weeks H.M.S. *Nelson* cruised up and down the coast



of Papua, hoisting the Union Jack, firing royal salutes, until the crew became experts at *feux de joie* and cheers for the Queen; while Commodore Erskine could read the proclamation—with exclamation and exultation—with his eyes shut. Many a tub of rice was served to fuzzy-topped cannibals from jungle glades.

But when the *feu de joie* was fired, all dropped flat or went bush. At one place, when the band played "Britannia Rules the Waves", an old chief said it was enough to wake the dead or kill the living—in either case an awful result.

Thus Papua for the umpteenth time was well and truly possessed by bell, book, and candle, by volley, cheers, and *feu de joie*. Then H.M.S. *Nelson* steamed away to Sydney Bay on 28 November.

Meanwhile Deputy Commissioner Romilly remained at Port Moresby aboard H.M.S. *Harrier* as the representative of Government. He was lying in wait to harry any traders and blackbirders who might come that way.

On 25 November 1884, the junk *Wong Hing* arrived from Cooktown and rattled her anchor on the Port Moresby coral. Aboard her were two white traders, Theodore Bevan and Digger Ned Snow. The latter, a veteran of the Goldie River gold-flop of 1878, had also travelled with Geelong Morrison on the abortive *Age* expedition to inland Papua in 1883.

As the *Wong Hing* clanked her anchor, a boat's crew from the *Harrier* came alongside the junk, handed a copy of Erskine's proclamation to Captain Ah Gim, and ordered him and the two whites to present themselves on board the *Harrier* at 1 p.m. sharp.

Bevan, Snow and Ah Gim kept the rendezvous. Deputy Commissioner Romilly then "stated that we had no right to be there at all; that no settlement of any kind would be allowed, and that the idea of future settlement being permitted was in his opinion very delusive".

Poor young Theo and poor old Ned returned to the junk in dismay. Bevan had heard of New Guinea as a land of gold and birds of paradise, of mighty trees, fertilizing streams, and millions of acres of glorious grass. "Now," says he, "all my hopes and plans seem shattered with sledge-hammer force. Had the Gates of Paradise been shut in my face, I could hardly have felt the blow more keenly."

Back went the junk to Cooktown. Digger Ned was so disappointed that he "terminated his existence by jumping over-

board—one of the first of the very numerous European victims of the miscalled Protectorate”.

Despite the growls of the traders, the multiple annexations of Chester, Romilly, and Erskine had in fact forestalled German annexation. Nine days after Romilly hoisted the flag at Port Moresby the German cruiser *Elizabeth* anchored at Duke of York Island and soon after annexed New Britain and New Ireland to the German Empire. And on 16 November 1884, ten days after Erskine's annexation of the south coast at Port Moresby, the Germans landed at Madang on Astrolabe Bay, and annexed the north-east of New Guinea, bestowing upon it the cognomen of Kaiser Wilhelmsland.

It looked like a put-up job. Derby the diplomat appeased the irate colonials of Australia by giving them the south-east chunk of 63,200 square miles, and connived with his cobber Bismarck at Germany's annexation of the north-east chunk of 67,000 square miles. The judgment of Solomon—or Judas.

Here endeth the tale of the annexation, *pro tem* until August 1914, when the Australians took German New Guinea and hoisted the Southern Cross. It's been hoisted there ever since.

Romilly, on his *Harrier*, was Acting Special Commissioner for New Guinea until 17 November 1884. Then the British Government appointed Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley as High Commissioner of the New Guinea Protectorate.

Peter was a gallant soldier, who had fought in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Since 1860 he had been in Australia as Commissioner of Defence for the eastern colonies. He modernized the forts of Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle, Adelaide, and Brisbane. And on his recommendation Australia established a militia for defence purposes in lieu of the old system of British garrisons which prevailed from 1788 to 1870.

Major-General Scratchley, aged fifty, was in no hurry to take up his important post as High Commissioner for cannibal land, particularly as there was a dispute as to who would pay his salary. He left the Papuans to their pap, while he argued with the annexationists of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, as to who would pay the high costs of his High Commissionership.

Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria eventually chipped in, and Commissioner Scratchley reached Port Moresby in August

1885, to govern the Queen's black subjects, and to keep an eye on the Germans.

Poor old Peter did not last long. He caught malaria and died on 2 December of the same year, after only three months' reign.

Dictator Romilly reigned once more until 26 February 1886. Then the Hon. John Douglas of Queensland was appointed Special Commissioner.

Following the unsuccessful attempts of Armit and Morrison, in 1883, to scale the ramparts of the Owen Stanley Range, the mighty mountains north of Port Moresby still beckoned this challenge to the adventurous: "Come and get me!"

The challenge was accepted by Henry Owen Forbes, a member of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, who departed from London on April Fool's Day 1885, with the foolhardy intention of scaling the "Great Mountain".

He reached Port Moresby on 29 August, and a month later started for the interior, making sextant surveys of the approaches on the plateaux east of Port Moresby in Astrolabe Range. There, "by means of tempting presents, conciliatory speeches and long smokes of the peaceful pipe", Forbes wooed the affection of the Sogeri tribe and tried to persuade them to escort him to the top of the main range. Missionary Chalmers joined the explorer and added his eloquence but still the Sogeri tribe swore they would not cross the "dead line" to the north, as the spirits of the mountain would tear any trespassers to pieces.

When Forbes and Chalmers started northwards for the climb their carriers deserted. After six months' triangulation and fruitless persuasion Forbes returned to the coast in May 1886.

The Hon. John Douglas, the new Special Commissioner, appointed the surveying Scot as Government Agent at Samarai, where he stayed until March 1887. He then went to Australia—visiting Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne to wangle grants from the various geographical societies for a further expedition to the summit of the Owen Stanley Range.

But while Forbes was dreaming of climbing to the summit of the mist-swathed mountains, others were planning. Forbes had the wish but he didn't have the method of reaching the top.

In July 1887 G. Hunter, who had his home on the Kemp Welch River, decided to climb the "Great mountain Paramagoro" (Owen Stanley) which the natives allege is the abode of spirits of the dead. With a mate, C. H. Martmann, and twenty-seven

carriers, he trudged up the Kemp Welch valley, and crossed the divide at the gap between Mount Brown and Mount Obree.

They reached the northern watershed and returned to the coast eleven days after their departure. It had rained all the time. They described the mountain flora as "magnificent in the extreme, with orchids and an endless variety of tropical flowering plants".

No sooner had they returned to Hunter's station than a second party of mountaineers departed for the interior. This was a scientific expedition from Victoria, led by Mr Cuthbertson. Assembling a hundred carriers at Hunter's station a few miles up the Kemp Welch River, they worked inland from Kappa Kappa, thirty miles east of Port Moresby. Explorer Cuthbertson was a surveyor used to tropical conditions. He had lived among the Dyaks of Borneo.

On 2 August 1887 he bee-lined up many a mountain stream and slippery boulder, reaching the summit of Mount Obree on the Dividing Range by 30 August.

By boiling-point observation he decided that the height of Mount Obree is 8000 feet, but this does not tally with 10,246 feet recorded by altitude observations from the deck of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* in 1849, when the mountain was named after Mr Obree, one of the ship's officers.

The *Rattlesnake* was right and the boiling water was tired, as modern maps show the height of Mount Obree to be 10,200 feet. Rain and heavy clouds interfered with the view from Mount Obree. But "Mount Owen Stanley was distinctly seen in the early morning, looming above".

Thus the Dividing Range was climbed twice while the Scottish geographer Forbes was wangling grants in the cities of Australia, dreaming of the conquest of Mount Owen Stanley alias the "devil devil" mountain, alias Paramagoro.

Back in Port Moresby in September, Forbes planned his expedition and set out on 1 October 1887, with Gleeson an old digger, George Belford a bird collector, and two natives Jack and Caesar.

This time it was a grand cavalcade as the party rode on horseback with packhorses in their train. They followed the miners' trail of 1878, across the Laloki valley and up the Goldie River to its source in the foothills of the range. Then they crossed the headwaters of the Brown River. Three weeks after leaving the Port, the horsemen reached the end of roads and stood "on the

long spur rising to the summit of Mount Owen Stanley, distant not more than a good day's climb".

Or so thought Forbes, but appearances are deceptive.

He gazed on the rugged peaks and pinnacles, and "on the topmost of these, Huxley Pinnacle, I have bestowed the name of my honoured master in biology, who from the deck of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* described and named the range in honour of her captain".

Probably the zeal of Forbes for his beloved master in biology caused him to overestimate Huxley's rights of nomenclature as the young surgeon of the *Rattlesnake* would not have the privilege of naming the mountain after his captain. Probably the name was given to it by the Admiralty cartographers.

Eager to proceed to the pinnacles, Forbes tried to get local carriers to guide him up the slopes but nothing would persuade them to venture into regions where: "the mountain devils will tear off your nails, pull out your joints, and eat your fingers. They will cut off your ears, pluck out your eyes and then cut your head off."

As no arguments would prevail, Forbes with Gleeson and Belford started to climb the Devil Mountain, leaving their tent, horses, and gear in charge of Jack and Caesar, the South Sea Islanders.

Scrambling up the slope on 30 October, explorer Forbes glanced through his telescope at the tent he left behind him. But it wasn't there. Instead he saw it erected in the village of Ebe, fifteen miles farther south on a crest.

At once he realized that something was wrong at the base camp. He squinted more carefully at Ebe, and could discern two natives parading in his own spare pants. He thought at first that these natives were Jack and Caesar who had moved the tent to Ebe, but then through the telescope he saw the tent collapsed "and I knew that we had some disaster to face". Hurrying back to where the camp should have been Forbes and his followers found the horses gone, the gear looted, and saddles strewn over the mountainscape, while there was no sign of Jack and Caesar.

It was evident that the camp had been attacked and ransacked by savages, but seven of the eight missing horses were found in a nearby valley, and seven saddles were recovered.

The disconsolate and frustrated explorers had to abandon all hope of reaching Huxley Pinnacle. They patched the saddles and took the home trail "with the bitterness of disappointment one

feels whose grasp is frustrated as it clutches at a coveted goal”.

Riding fast and light they reached Port Moresby on 5 November 1887 and were surprised to see Jack and Caesar still alive. They had double-banked and ridden posthaste to the Port, to bring rescue to their masters after the camp was looted.

There was no more exploring of the Great Dividing Range until after the arrival at Port Moresby, on 4 September 1888, of His Excellency, Dr William MacGregor, Colonial Secretary of Fiji, who converted the Protectorate of British New Guinea into the annexed Crown Colony of British New Guinea, with himself as Administrator.

His long and benevolent reign lasted until 1898. And during the ten years of his sway the colonies of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria contributed £15,000 a year jointly to the upkeep of the newest jewel in Queen Victoria's crown.

MacGregor was a wandering Scot with a great love for his Queen. He wanted to see as much of her new territory and as many of her surplus black subjects as soon as possible.

His first Ordinance prohibited the supply to natives of fire-arms and fire-water—sinister singly and dangerous dually; his second prohibited natives from selling their land; and his third prohibited them from travelling away from their own districts, except under permit.

The government staff consisted of fourteen officers and three sailors, their combined wages amounting to £6744—of which His Excellency got £1700, and Judge Winter £1000.

To earn his £1700 Walkabout William started exploring in 1889, and climbed to the summit of the Owen Stanley Range via the Vanapa valley as mentioned in Chapter Three of this book. He succeeded where Forbes failed, and at the top sneered at him for naming Huxley Pinnacle.

Says William: “There is no topmost pinnacle. Great rocky precipitous buttresses are thrown out by the mountain, exceeding twelve thousand feet in height, and all these are bristling with peaks and pinnacle-like rocks and contain hundreds of inaccessible crags and precipices more than enough to try one's resources in bestowing names.”

So William the Presbyterian abolished the pinnacle named after Huxley the agnostic.

Instead, he named the quintette of rocky buttresses Mount

Victoria "deeming the name of the Sovereign bestowed on the mountain as a whole sufficient for all practical purposes". But the landfarer's loyalty to the Queen had been anticipated forty-three years previously by seafarer Yule of the *Bramble* who, in April 1846, sighted a peculiarly shaped peak "which we named Mount Victoria".

So Port Moresby and its hinterland were well and truly annexed, explored, named and tamed—and the blanks of the map were delineated.

This little digression brings us back to the story of the Fly River, which was probed by D'Albertis in 1877, in pursuit of science, while the missionaries and gold-diggers were pioneering Port Moresby.

## CHAPTER X

THE Fly flowed on for eight years after D'Albertis disturbed its serenity. Then in 1885 the cannibals in their thatched long-houses heard once again the chug-chug of a steamboat.

This chugging was the S.S. *Bonito*, commanded by Captain H. C. Everill, leader of the Geographical Society of Australasia's New Guinea Exploring Expedition—a title rivalling the river it was going to explore.

The *Bonito* left Thursday Island on 14 July 1885, with twelve white men, a coloured crew, and an armament of Winchesters, Sniders, Colts, Bull-dogs, and fowling-pieces.

The expedition was completely equipped for scientific and geographic exploration. Their leader decided "to go up the river Fly and take the first large branch to the eastward".

Fourteen days after leaving Thursday Island the *Bonito* reached a junction and "finding a strong current and large logs of wood drifting down the north-east branch, I named this the Strickland River in honour of Sir E. Strickland".

The date was 28 July.

The *Bonito* steamed up the new river till 3 August when "in less time to relate we were saluted with a perfect shower of arrows". But none of the trespassers were hit, and the *Bonito* swam upstream till 9 August, when she stranded on shingles. For fourteen days the scientists collected specimens; then heavy rain fell, the river rose, and the little ship bravely steamed farther upstream, finally grounding on 27 August.

Here she remained stuck for nearly two months, while boat and land parties explored farther upstream, reaching the foothills of the Central Range where the Strickland River takes its origin. These mountains were named the Von Mueller Range, after Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich Von Mueller, the Danish botanist, who had devoted a lifetime to Australian exploration and the classification of Australian plants. Optimistic Captain Everill reported: "the lower hills will be found admirably adapted for



growing coffee, quinine, cocoa, and rubber; while the lower alluvial lands cannot fail to produce rice and sugar."

Unfortunately, after fifty-five years they are still adapted—but never adopted. The leader estimated his position then was latitude 5 degrees 30 minutes south and stated: "the country hereabouts and as far as we can see to the northwards is composed of undulating hills, very heavily wooded."

On 28 October the party turned homewards, averting a battle down the Fly, with 200 cannibals, by "blowing the syren whistle". So the Fly's biggest tributary was explored and named after a governor. The junction of this mighty tributary with the main stream is now appropriately named Everill Junction.

The next dissector of the Fly's innards was Dr William MacGregor. The energetic MacGregor was no sit-at-home administrator, drinking whisky in a squatter's chair on the veranda of Government House at Port Moresby. He was a forth-farer who travelled far and wide throughout the mysterious terrain which it was his duty to administer.

He reached Kiwai Island at the mouth of the Fly, on the government steamer *Merrie England*, in December 1889, and on Boxing Day started upstream from Kiwai village with a steam launch, two whaleboats, and a party of six white and twelve coloured men.

Three days later he was 176 miles from the mouth of the Fly, beyond tidal waters. Here he made careful measurements and calculations: "The average depth was 39 feet, the average current 3.25 miles an hour, and the width of the river 600 yards."

Sucking his pencil, and consulting a Ready Reckoner, the calculating Scot declared: "The quantity of water coming down in 24 hours was one hundred and eighty thousand million gallons. The Fly River sends down fresh water enough to supply twice the present population of the globe, with sixty gallons a day a head."

After this aqueous algebraical exercise, the Administrator steamed onwards, passing the junction of the Strickland which he named "Everill Junction in honour of the previous explorer".

Carefully mapping and naming the configurations of the main stream, MacGregor proceeded up Fly until he reached the Alice, "which I have named in honour of the distinguished man who first travelled there, D'Albertis Junction".

Following the Fly in and out of Dutch territory along the



GOARIBARI VILLAGE. CONCH SHELL BEING BLOWN "CALLING  
ALL CANNIBALS"



GOARIBARI SMOKING PIPE

141st meridian of longitude, the party on 13 January reached an island in the river: "63 miles above D'Albertis Junction, and 523 miles from the mouth of the Fly".

This he named Macrossan Island in honour of the Queensland Parliamentarian. Next day the launch, like her predecessors, stuck fast at the limit of navigation, 535 miles from the mouth of the river.

Onwards went MacGregor with two whites and eight natives, in the whaleboat which they alternately rowed, pushed and shoved. After four miles' push and pull drill they came to a tributary of the Fly, which "was named by me the Palmer, in honour of Sir Arthur Palmer of Queensland".

As the Fly was shallow, shingly and full of rapids, MacGregor ascended the Palmer, until he reached "the 600 mile Camp" where in the shingles some "fine colours" of gold were found. Here a log fort was built and left in charge of three armed natives, while the party pushed and pulled the whaleboat five more miles, until they came to boulders blocking the stream. Here MacGregor named Mount Donaldson after the Treasurer of Queensland, and Mount Blucher after "a German name that is a household word to British ears".

Boat logged, MacGregor marched with four men through the thick jungle towards Mount Donaldson, but was halted after several miles. He had reached his farthest point, 610 miles from the mouth of the river, and thirty miles above D'Albertis's farthest.

On a tree at this point he carved "BNG" under the broad arrow, then started the return journey on 24 January 1890, scudding downstream to the *Merrie England* at Kiwai village after an absence of nearly six weeks.

Summing up the results of his expedition the leader reported: "Those parts of the country that appear habitable are at such a great distance from the sea, that it is very unlikely that any European would care to settle there, so long as superior inducements are offered by Australia."

And Europeans have taken Billy MacGregor's advice ever since. There is still no settlement by whites in the basin of the mighty Fly River.

Bird-shooters, missionaries, and patrol officers have chugged the paths of D'Albertis, Everill, and MacGregor, as time flowed on, and the Fly flowed on, decade after decade, while the riparian

villagers dwelled in their huts of grass in the fashion of their forefathers from time immemorial, scarcely disturbed by the occasional visits of white men.

The fierce tropic sun sucked thousands of millions of gallons a day from the tepid Papuan Gulf, and the steam was carried by monsoonal breezes in pregnant clouds to be condensed and precipitated on the chilly serrated summits of the towering New Guinea Dividing Range, at the watershed of the Strickland and the Fly where no white man's foot had trod.

The rain poured, the Fly filled, and the moisture seeped back to the sea, over the vast catchment area by senseless perpetual motion, irrespective of human will or wish.

Then came Sir Hubert Murray's long reign as "Number One Puppa" of Papua, and ardent young men were trained in anthropology, ethnology, surveying; and learned the lingo of the natives to bring more and ever more uncontrolled areas under control.

So it happened that on 2 June 1913 G. H. Massey-Baker, Resident Magistrate of the Western Division, and Assistant Resident Magistrate, S. D. Burrows, started from Daru in two launches and a whaleboat. A month was occupied in exploring the Fly and Strickland rivers, then Mr Baker selected a spot fifteen miles up the Strickland River as the site for a new control station. The position was suitable in every way—except for the millions of mosquitoes which were "simply maddening".

Five miles from the proposed control station the party discovered a noble lake, which was called Lake Murray in honour of their boss. Baker judged its perimeter to be a hundred miles. He writes:

We were inveigled ashore by friendly unarmed natives in canoes, but on landing and proceeding towards the main house, we were surrounded by a host of painted, fully armed warriors, whose intentions were unmistakable. The steadiness of the police, combined with a slow backward movement to the whaleboat saved the situation.

On another occasion steaming up the river we ran into the arms of about a hundred and fifty warriors in canoes fresh from a head-hunting expedition. It required a volley from the police to clear the way. Shortly afterwards we came upon the result of their vile work in the shape of bodies, headless and armless, as well as partly skinned trunks of women, lying on the shore, at what was apparently a peaceful sago-making camp.

On the way back to the base camp about eight hundred warriors attempted to stop us, but thanks to our powerful glasses the ruse was

discovered in time. Two or three unarmed natives stood on the beach and made peaceful signs, while about four hundred warriors with their canoes ready lay hidden in the grass and as many more lay behind the village. As soon as they saw we were going on without taking any notice of them they showed themselves, and the whole place was alive with them. I put a good many miles between us before camping that night.

Mr Baker added that the coco-nuts were the finest he had ever seen; that tobacco grew freely, and that the sugar-cane was excellent.

The natives of this grassy lake propel their canoes with a special type of paddle with a broad circular flat blade used for pressing down the reeds so that they can skim over it in their canoes. The dress of the men is simple, consisting of only one nut shell; the women wear a "fore and aft rami" which is "a grass petticoat covering the back and front, but open at the sides".

The year 1914 was a busy one for the fly-by-nights and fly-by-days, as Lieutenant-Governor Murray and his merry boys started to peer and probe into the population to decide whether or not it was advisable to establish a resident magistrate for the inland riparian tribes.

The tall and energetic Lieutenant-Governor's motto was to see for himself, so on 27 March 1914 he boarded the *Elevala* launch at Daru, accompanied by his private secretary, Mr Leonard Murray, Messrs S. D. Burrows, A.R.M., and Keppie, engineer, with ten native police and a native crew.

Absent from Daru only twenty-one days, he travelled 1300 miles up and down the river reporting "we ascended the Fly for a distance of 530 miles, and its tributary the Alice for about 35 miles, and saw but two villages".

On the homeward journey the Lieutenant-Governor turned into the Strickland, cruised up its tributary the Herbert, and inspected Lake Murray. They found the villagers "were friendly but their idea of commerce was rather ghastly, for the principal articles of barter, which they produced, were skulls, jawbones, and stuffed heads".

On returning to Daru on 18 April, the Lieutenant-Governor showed prospector Frank Pryke some specimens of alluvial wash collected at Lario Bank in the upper reaches of the Fly.

Traces of gold were found in the washings. So Pryke decided to give it a Fly.

The lure of gold makes men do crazy things! Ever since MacGregor in 1890 reported "fine colours" on the Upper Fly, the challenge of El Dorado had beckoned to adventurers.

On 10 May 1914 a strong prospecting party, financed by Sir Rupert Clarke, left Port Moresby with a 30-foot motor-launch, and a power-driven whaleboat. Sir Rupert, as leader, was accompanied by the Pryke brothers, Frank and Jim, Papuan prospectors, two other whites, and thirty native carriers. On 7 June they established a base camp at the junction of the Tully and Palmer rivers, 568 miles from the ocean.

Sir Rupert's wish was to reach the headwaters of the Fly.

He left the launch at Tully Junction, and chugged upstream in the whaleboat another thirty miles to the point where MacGregor's boat had stranded.

"We too," says Sir Rupert, "found it impossible to go any farther. So we left the boat, and with twenty natives pushed on to Mount Donaldson. We climbed the mountain, and built a cairn on the summit."

Like the Duke of York, who marched his moaning men up to the top of the hill and marched them down again, so Sir Rupert marched his carriers up and down Mount Donaldson. Then led them up the banks of the Palmer "another five miles and came to an opening between two high cliffs. We made a raft of bamboo and went in between the cliffs. Soon these nearly met, and as it was very gloomy and our craft very fragile, we had to return. The point where we turned back was 630 miles up the river".

So they had surpassed MacGregor's farthest by twenty miles. They found no gold but "any amount of colours not rich enough to make the working worth while".

The boating baronet sped downstream and reached Daru on 4 July. The official records of Papua give a brief mention of the expedition's departure, but no mention of its return.

'Twas ever thus. Official records take little or no cognizance of private explorations. Still, great kudos is due to riparian Rupert and the prospecting Prykes for getting twenty miles beyond MacGregor's farthest; and for climbing Mount Donaldson which had baffled him.

That same year Officers Ryan and Burrows took the *Elevala* up

a tributary which runs into the Upper Fly from the east, and on 12 June left the launch while they explored the jungle for six days in the direction of the Strickland River.

Returning, they found that the water of the tributary had subsided, and the *Elevala* had stuck fast on a mud-bank, nearly 600 miles from the coast. They prayed for rain, but in vain. For five months she remained aground while her officers daily waited for a deluge. During the long wait, Officer Ryan went to Daru and back in the whaleboat, a journey of 1200 miles.

At last, on 11 November, came the floods, and the Fly flounders were able to return to civilization at Daru. The stream where they were stranded is now named the Elevala River. It was just one little incident in a patrol officer's career.

In December 1920 the western bank of the Fly was explored by Resident Magistrate A. P. Lyons, of Daru, accompanied by Patrol Officer Leo Austen and Engineer Teddy Mears.

The purpose of this trip was to catch the murderers of two bird-of-paradise shooters, Bell and Drechsler, who had disappeared in Dutch territory and never returned, though Chinese bird-shooters reported they had found some remains of the missing white men.

Lyons, Mears and Austen, in the ketch *Nivani*, proceeded up the Fly to the Dutch border at Kaia Kaia village, where they made contact with Dutch detectives and searched the terrain for remains.

They found some empty cognac bottles and cartridge cases, but the village where the bird-shooters had been murdered was burned down, and the murderers of Bell and Drechsler could not be found.

As it was the duty of the Dutch to find them and bring them to justice, Lyons, Mears and Austen returned downstream after exploring thoroughly the western river-banks and rivulets near the Dutch border.

Fourteen months later Leo Austen and Patrol Officer P. O. Logan started to probe the *terra incognita* of the upper reaches of the Alice River. Leaving Daru on 12 January 1922, in the 25-ton ketch *Nivani*, they reached the D'Albertis Junction on 10 February, and boated up the Alice, beyond D'Albertis's and Murray's farthest, till their launch stranded, thirty-seven



miles up. Two islands were named Waldron and Logan, after Austen's companions.

Then they footed northwards through the jungle up the Alice valley for eleven days, and reached the foothills of the Star Mountains, which tower to 13,000 feet at the spot where Papua, Dutch New Guinea, and Mandated New Guinea meet.

On the border of Dutch territory the savages were peaceable, as they were accustomed to hearing about bird-of-paradise shooters, licensed by the Dutch Government. But "seeing a white man for the first time was too much for them" says Magistrate Austen.

Austen and Logan returned downstream to Daru on 5 April, and after several months refitting and recuperating started again for the Alice River, which the natives name Ok-Tedi, Ok being a river, and Tedi, its name.

Their aim was to trace the Alice-Tedi to its source in the Star Mountains, and if possible, to find a pass through the Dividing Range into Mandated New Guinea.

Establishing a base camp at Wukpit on the lower Alice, Austen left Logan in charge of the camp, and on 16 October 1922 started to pole upstream with three canoe rafts, eight police boys, and eighteen carriers.

"The Tedi River," he notes, "should be called the River of Islands, for we are continually passing some."

He also passed a lot of rapids which were climbed in canny fashion like salmon coming up-river from the sea. When the stream was too shallow or turbulent for poling, the canoe rafts were tugged by a team of wading police and carriers, and there was many a capset and upsize before the Tedi was conquered.

With the party were some Ok-Tedi interpreters. Austen also possessed a vocabulary of the Malay "trade" language, known as Mirikappa, which he copied from a notebook belonging to the murdered bird-shooter E. D. Bell.

This lingua-franca enabled the explorers to freely pass through the villages on their chup-chup—walkabout to you—exclaiming "tapit! tapit!" (friend! friend!) as they poled their canoes past scattered villages for six days till the river "ran like a mill race", and it was impossible to canoe any farther.

On 22 October, after lashing the canoes securely in a small creek, Austen loaded his carriers with a month's supply of grub,

and started an overland chup-chup northwards along a native track.

A week later "our way was blocked by seemingly impassable cliffs, and the river was far too strong and too deep for us to attempt to ford it".

With many a slide and slither the explorer and his carriers zigzagged up the cliffs, and came to a village of Stone Age men who had never before seen iron. Austen swapped a knife for a bunch of bananas, and planted some white man's vegetable seeds in the native gardens, then continued his clamber along the banks of the roaring mountain torrent.

On 1 November the party came to a rattan suspension bridge across the Tedi. Says Austen: "after all carriers and armed constables had crossed safely, I blondined over, grasping the foot rail with my bare feet in a monkey-like manner."

Like mountain-goats in a Scotch mist the explorers hopped from crag to crag, getting higher and higher, until at last they came to a village of light-coloured men of the genuine Stone Age breed.

The leader generously doled out a few knives, which the pale-skinned Stone-Agers hugged to their breasts as they danced with glee, then cut hell out of all the trees in the vicinity.

The farthest point was reached on 7 November, when the police boys built a ladder of rickety rattan on a tree a hundred feet high.

Austen ascended to the arboreal platform and gazed hungrily at the limestone peaks of the Star Mountains where the Tedi River was born.

Alas, his tucker-boxes were getting empty, so reluctantly he gave the order "About turn!" and retired down the Tedi, scattering knives and seeds to give the Tedyites a good impression of the "Gubment".

He estimated the population of the Alice valley as not more than 2000 natives, and that the country "will never be of much use from a commercial point of view for many years to come".

Explorer Austen notes: "The tribes on both sides of the Tedi quite openly admitted the practice of eating human flesh, but they state it is only an enemy killed in war that is eaten. They never drink the blood of a human being."

The expedition farewelled the enemy-eaters, reached Wukpit camp on 14 November and soon was scudding down the Fly *en route* for Daru and home.

Thanks to the tireless, courageous, and unpublicized work of these patrols, the basin of the mighty Fly River, with its tributaries, the Alice, the Palmer and the Strickland were now completely explored and mapped to the foothills of the Dividing Range. Still there was a problem to solve: Was there a passage over the summit of the mountains to the northern watershed?

In 1926 Patrol Officers Charles Karius and Ivan Champion were assigned to the duty of tracing the Fly River to its ultimate source, beyond MacGregor's 610-mile farthest point of 1890.

D'Albertis, Everill, and MacGregor had each striven to reach the cloud-swathed mountains of the Great Divide, but each had been baffled at the foothills. Through telescopes they had seen and named the mighty peaks towering up to 13,000 feet.

On the northern side of the watershed, the Sepik River had been traced upstream in a similar fashion. But no white man from either side had crossed the Central Divide. It remained a *terra incognita*—a haunt of what? Was there gold in "them thar hills"? Were they inhabited?

Collating the maps of the northern and southern watersheds, it was evident that the Fly on the south, and the Sepik on the north, were headed in the same hide-out.

A theory gained credence that both streams arose in a mountain lake, but it was only a guess, a riparian riddle to which no white man knew the answer.

Sir Hubert Murray's brain-wave was to send a Papuan patrol up the Fly to its source, across the Divide, and down the Sepik on the other side.

It looked easy enough in theory. The only snag was the crossing of the Victor Emanuel Range, marked on the maps with the beckoning challenge—"Unexplored".

Charles H. Karius, leader of the patrol, aged twenty-nine, was Assistant Resident Magistrate at Ioma. An artilleryman of the first A.I.F., he served in Flanders in the 1914-18 war and joined the Papuan patrol service in 1920.

For the Fly expedition, he selected as his assistant Ivan Champion, patrol officer in charge of Kambisi district. Champion, born in Papua, was son of a government official at Port Moresby.

After careful preparations, the Karius-Champion North-west Patrol left Daru Island on 8 December 1926.

They travelled in the *Elevala*, a 30-ton auxiliary-engined ketch, accompanied by the launch *Minnetonka*—to help them on

their way by towing them off mud-banks. The party had stores sufficient for six months, to be transported on the backs of a team of forty native carriers, recruited from the islands at the mouth of the Fly.

In addition to the two white men and the carriers, there were eleven native police, armed with rifles—a total of fifty-three persons. Rather a large party to feed, but that's the way they do things up there. Human packhorses are the only possible form of transport through jungle land; but to employ them creates a pretty little problem in itself: Who will carry the food to feed the carriers?

The maximum load of a carrier allowed by law is 40 lb. But, in one month, a carrier eats 40 lb. of rice, which is the most compact form of food. Forty carriers can carry enough rice to feed themselves for one month—but they can't carry anything else! The problem is solved by progressing in a series of short stages, with the carriers traipsing back and forth, bringing up 40 lb. at a time. By this method, the forward advance is naturally slowed. But it enables the carriers to hump not only their own food, but also the extras which the white man requires for his mysterious gadabouting: tent-flies, cooking-utensils, tinned food and medicines, as well as articles of trade, including tomahawks, beads, mirrors and cloth.

These trade goods are essential. They win the friendship of savage tribes. Still more important, they can be swapped for food in the native villages, thus ekeing out supplies for the small army on the march.

The *Elevala* and *Minnetonka* chugged upstream, making an average of fifty miles per day, against the current. Each evening at dusk the vessels anchored and the party camped. It would have been dangerous, if not impossible, to navigate in darkness among the eddies, whirlpools, mud-banks and floating logs of the river. For the first 150 miles the Fly is tidal, and clogged with moving mud-banks which make the channel impossible to chart. The banks are low-lying, covered with jungle, infested with mosquitoes—and with native villagers, who live in straw huts on piles and eat fish and sago.

Beyond the tidal waters, on the fourth day, the patrol came to more "open" country, where the jungled banks of the mighty stream changed gradually to stretches of grassy and sugar-cane swamps. Here the villagers were more numerous. They travel in

canoes made from hollowed logs, varying from thirty to sixty feet in length, about eighteen inches wide and twelve inches deep. Crews of twenty men, standing upright, propel these log-skiffs faster than a racing eight, shouting and singing as they paddle. They are armed with bows made of split bamboo eight feet long with a string of split rattan, and arrows made of reeds tipped with cassowary bone.

The men are of magnificent physique "with deep chests, broad shoulders, and muscular arms, but covered with skin disease", as Champion describes them in his book, *Across New Guinea*, adding that the women are "fairly tall, and rather repulsive-looking".

Leaving the skin-diseased men and repulsive women, the *Elevala* and *Minnetonka* continued up-river for another day, passing the junction of the Strickland, which was coming down in flood. This is the biggest tributary of the Fly. Beyond the junction the two boats chugged, and the scenery changed from grassy swamp to bright-green creeper-covered banks, with lagoons or billabongs, covered with hyacinth, on which were "thousands of black and white geese, ducks, and here and there the beautiful white egret standing in solitude".

Onwards for another day. Then the expedition came to the Dutch border, which abuts on the Fly for a hundred miles of its course. Here the villagers are head-hunters, cannibals, and nasty pieces of work generally, warring constantly with neighbouring tribes up and down river.

Leaving the Dutch cannibals after two days' paddling, Karius and Champion chugged on, passing the junction of the Alice River, discovered by D'Albertis. Next day the river shallowed, and the *Elevala* stuck in one-and-a-half fathoms, 508 miles from the river's mouth. Camp was made on a nearby sandy beach.

In its sands the carriers and police boys found hundreds of freshwater turtles' eggs. That night was a gorge . . .

As the *Elevala* was now unable to proceed any farther, the *Minnetonka*, a smaller vessel, nosed her way onwards for another eight miles, when she also stuck—and that was the end of the expedition's boat comfort. Thirteen days after leaving Daru, a site for a base camp was selected on a knoll 523 miles from the river's mouth. The stores were unloaded from the two boats, which then returned downstream.

Karius, Champion, their eleven police and forty carriers spent a Merry Christmas building a hut, forty feet long by thirty

feet wide, to be used as a store and depot for the venture into the Beyond. Ten days were occupied in this work and in cutting paths, transporting stores, and overhauling everything for the Big Plunge.

On New Year's Day 1927 a start was made hopefully towards the beckoning range, beyond which was the Sepik—somewhere.

It had taken the explorers three weeks to reach and establish their Camp No. 1 near Macrossan Island, below the junction of the Fly and Palmer rivers. They had not yet reached Sir William MacGregor's farthest point of 1890, when the river had been high and Sir William had boated almost to the Palmer Junction.

Karius and Champion, with their convoy of police and carriers, now had to plod along the river-bank, hacking a track through the jungle and muddy swamps. After a week of trudging in the sludge, twenty-seven of the forty carriers deserted, stole canoes from a local village, and started downstream on a 500-mile paddle to their homes. This was a blow; but Champion used his charm—and his trade tomahawks—to recruit emergency carriers from the naked tribesmen of the swamps.

The tedious march went on for seven more weeks, but, for every mile of advance, the carriers had to trudge ten miles back and forth from depot to depot. On 23 February the deserting carriers returned—under escort. They had been arrested after reaching their homes at the mouth of the Fly and sent back upstream in the *Minnetonka* in charge of a native sergeant and three armed constables.

Then came the floods, and the party was a washout, so rafts were built and all stores ferried across to higher ground.

Onwards and onwards, ever up the river, in maddening monotony the pathfinders plodded in the humid heat. Tormented by insects, covered with boils and ulcerated sores, perspiring, cursing, hacking jungle, bearing burdens, walking on death adders, sleeping in the rain which fell nightly—slowly, very slowly, they went towards river's end. On the last day of March the expedition reached the limestone foothills of the Great Central Range and built their No. 10 Camp.

They were 615 miles from the mouth of the Fly, five miles beyond Sir William MacGregor's farthest point of 1890. Already they had been four months on the journey—and now their real difficulties were to begin, for the mountains barred the way

ahead. It had taken them more than three months to plod a hundred miles along the muddy banks from the point where they had disembarked from the boats and established No. 1 Camp.

But Champion explains: "In making those hundred miles towards our objective, we had traversed on foot nearly a thousand."

The shuttling of the forty-pound carriers back and forth between camp and camp explains why one ordinary mile became ten Fly miles.

Now the venturers had the genuine thrill of entering a region previously untrodden by white men. What secrets might it hold? This is the lure which has attracted red-blooded men of all times and climes to fare forth into untrodden lands. And many a brave soul has met doom in the search, martyrs to the curiosity of mankind.

Camp No. 10 was on the Palmer River, a tributary of the Upper Fly. It was decided to follow this stream up to its headwaters, in the hope that its valley would give access to the top of the range, and thence to the northern watershed at the head of the Sepik.

Plod! plod! But it was not across muddy marshes that the explorers plodded. Their route now led into deep gorges of limestone, their sides towering sheer for hundreds of feet above the bubbling river. Underfoot the limestone was sharp and brittle, lacerating the soles of the carriers. Says Champion: "Slowly we went upwards, sometimes on all fours. A false step or hold would mean a fall on the sharp pointed rock. On reaching the top of a ridge, we would find we had to crawl down again on the other side into a basin, and round it like ants in a sugar-bowl we would go—but slowly—seeking a way out again."

For a fortnight the human ants crawled over the limestone ridges and gorges, seeking a gap which might lead to a pass in the range beyond. Frustrated, they pitched their Camp No. 13 on a spur between Mount Blucher and Mount Donaldson, near the headwaters of the Palmer River. Now they were beyond Sir Rupert Clarke's farthest point of 1914, and *terra incognita* was ahead.

They were baulked. Their only consolation was the scenery, which was mountainously grand—particularly after five months on the flats of the Fly, where the horizon was limited eternally by the two banks of the river. Karius went off with a small party

of police to explore for a pass through the ranges, leaving Champion in charge of the toiling, footsore, homesick carriers who were bringing up the stores to Camp No. 13.

A few days later Karius returned with exciting news—he had found a river “flowing to the north”!

Probably it was a tributary of the Sepik—but there was a snag—the going across the range was too sharp, stony, and barren for the weakened carriers. These men had been recruited from the mud-flats at the mouth of the Fly. Some of them were useless in the mountains, and afraid to venture farther into the strange land of sharp stones.

As leader of the expedition, Karius decided to make a dash for the Sepik with a small, mobile party—leaving Champion to take the homesick carriers and surplus stores back down-river to Daru!

It was a bitter disappointment to the younger man, after having come far and suffered so much discomfort, to be turned back on the threshold of achievement. But the decision taken by Karius was wise. Five months had gone by since the expedition left Daru. The only hope of getting across the range was to make a quick dash for it.

The parties divided on 1 May 1927.

Karius took with him six native police and twenty-one carriers leaving Champion with five police and sixteen carriers.

It was arranged that Champion should wait for three weeks, and then, if he did not hear from the other party, he would know that Karius had gone on.

During the three weeks of waiting, Champion did a bit of light exploring on his own. Leaving three armed constables to guard the camp, he went with the other three police and some carriers to the plateau at the headwaters of the Palmer River.

Here, he had one of those enthralling experiences which have been such a feature of modern Australian exploration in our tropical territories. He found a large population of friendly Stone Age people dwelling in the upland valleys, cultivating their gardens: people who had never seen iron or cloth or glass—or a white man! They had cultivated their fertile soil for centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, innocent of the wonders, plunders and blunders of civilization.

Champion, a patrol officer trained in the “treat ’em gently” school of Sir Hubert Murray, has a winning way with savages.



Instead of shooting a few "to encourage the others", he practises Peace with Honour diplomacy when he meets uncivilized men.

Says Champion: "I began by giving them small knives in exchange for food. Then I gave them some tobacco and got the police to talk with them. Soon they were laughing with the police, each trying to understand the other by signs and words."

As the nervousness of the Stone Age men disappeared, Champion started to learn their language. By pantomime he picked up a stone, fixing it intently with his gaze, and loudly said, "Stone!"

Then he handed the stone to a chief and looked inquiringly until the chief said the native word for it. Next, he pointed to some water, and the chief said:

"Wok!"

Champion smiled, led the chief to the river, and pointed again:

"Wok!" said the chief.

Champion kept on pointing with a questioning look, until finally a bright youngster said:

"Wok Luap!"

This meant that the Palmer River is known to the natives as the Luap River.

With endless patience, pantomime, and presents, Champion discovered that other rivers in the district were named Bol, Feneng—and faraway to the north was the Takin.

Was the Takin the Sepik—goal of their desire?

After making rough maps Champion located the Bol and the Feneng—joining and flowing southwards. He decided that the Feneng was the headwater stream of the mighty Fly, and that the mysterious "Wok Takin" to the far north, across the Divide, must indeed be the Sepik—objective of the patrol's search.

Had Karius, on his mobile lone patrol, found this Wok Takin?

Champion waited for more than three weeks, but Karius did not return. The junior officer then obeyed instructions and began the retreat downstream with his party by slow and laborious marches. On 11 June he was back at the old Camp No. 10 on the Palmer River. There he decided to raft the party and the cargo 500 miles down to the sea.

Trees were felled, and three large rafts were made of logs eighteen feet long and two feet six inches in diameter, lashed with rattan. On these a superstructure was built, to keep the

passengers and cargo high and dry. On 15 June the long down-river float began, and for three weeks the rafters were wafted on the broad yellow bosom of the Fly.

On 10 July they saw a ship coming upstream towards them. It was the *Elevala*! Aboard was Charles H. Karius, anxiously coming to look for Champion.

The north-flowing river which Karius had located in the mountains was not the Sepik. It was a creek flowing to join the Strickland River, which bends like a boomerang in its upper reaches, and flows south into the Fly.

So Karius, with his light and mobile party, had failed to find the pass through the Great Central Range. He had traced the Strickland down until it widened to a raftable stream; then, like Champion, returned to the mouth of the Fly—foiled.

The expedition was a failure—but a glorious failure. More than six months of sweating had failed to find the pass across the Divide to the Sepik. Still, the explorers had cut tracks, established camps, and made maps of the “lie of the land”.

They were confident that, if allowed to try again, they would *get through*. These Boys of the Kangaroo-dog Breed have a motto: “If at first you don’t succeed, Fly, Fly, Fly again.” They decided to give it another Fly.

Believing that experience teaches, Karius and Champion planned to make their second trip less tedious in its early stages than the first had been. On that occasion it had taken them four months to reach the limestone foothills of the Great Dividing Ranges. For three of these four months they had been cutting a track through the jungle for a hundred miles on the banks of the Palmer River, beyond the limit of navigation.

To travel one hundred miles, their carriers had to plod 1000 miles, shuttling back and forth with forty-pound loads, relaying the stores from depot to depot. The result was that, at the end of the four months, the carriers and the food-supplies were too exhausted to attempt the crossing of the ranges.

On the second trip, it was decided to take a very large number of carriers, so as to avoid the delays of relaying and over-fatigue. When all the stores had been carried up to the limestone foothills, half the carriers would be sent back down-river, leaving only the strongest and freshest to continue the journey—with full supplies of food.

Karius estimated that one hundred carriers would be required

to transport the stores and their own food from the limit of navigation to the foothills of the Dividing Range. He recruited thirty-two strong men from the D'Entrecasteaux Islands—hill billies who are surefooted on steep slopes; and an extra twenty-six recruits by calling for volunteers among the prisoners in Port Moresby gaol.

These fifty-eight human beasts of burden, with fourteen native armed constables, and their two white leaders, left Port Moresby by the motor-launch *Eleva* on 17 September 1927, three months after the return of the explorers from their first unsuccessful attempt.

At Daru, at the mouth of the Fly, they recruited another twenty-four carriers, making a total of eighty-two. That was enough for a start, as others could be recruited for short stages from the villages along the route.

Champion left Daru on 21 September with all the carriers and some of the stores and police, travelling in the *Eleva* and *Minnetonka*.

A halt was made three days up-river, at the village of Suwami. There Champion bought fourteen canoes, while the *Eleva* returned to Daru for Karius and the rest of the party and stores. The idea was to tow the canoes behind the motor-boats, as a method of transporting the big mob of carriers upstream, without overloading or crowding the launches.

Like many another big idea, however, this one phutted. A start was made from Suwami with the canoes in tow, but at this point (120 miles from its mouth) the Fly is five miles wide. A southerly buster on the five-mile-wide river raised choppy waves which swamped the towed canoes and dumped the black passengers into the muddy flood. That was the end of the canoe-plan. Everyone was put aboard the two motor-boats—a hundred men on the 30-ton ketch, and twenty-five on the tiny *Minnetonka*—including the crews, plus all the stores of the expedition.

Thus loaded above plimsoll, the two boats chugged upstream, with standing room only on the decks.

Ten days later the limit of navigation was reached, 538 miles from the mouth of the Fly. Here the cohorts of carriers were disembarked with the cargo, and the explorers were back on the land-track, up the Palmer, which they had cut so laboriously on the expedition of nine months earlier. During that interval the lush jungle vines had grown again on the track, and cutters had to be sent ahead to clear the way.



THE LATE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR  
SIR HUBERT MURRAY



KIKORI CHILD DECORATED FOR FEAST

There was now a plenitude of stores at this advanced post in the foothills of the mountain bulwark—ample for the dash across the Divide. This satisfactory result achieved, fifty of the carriers were sent back down-river in charge of three police. They walked part of the way, then rafted down to where the *Elevala* was waiting at the limit of navigation.

The total number now left for the trans-mountain trek was forty-five persons, comprising Karius, Champion, six native police, a native cook, and thirty-six carriers—twenty-six D'Entrecasteaux Islanders, and ten Port Moresby prisoners; all tough guys.

Four days were spent in this camp to give the carriers a spello, while the white masters carefully checked and weighed the stores, packing everything into 40lb. bundles. They reckoned that sixteen of the thirty-six carriers would be required to transport stores, including tent-flies, trade tomahawks, medicine, cooking-utensils, lamps and kerosene, bedding, and the personal swags of Karius and Champion. This left only twenty carriers to transport food: eighteen bags of rice, one bag of flour, and one bag of sundry groceries. The six police each carried a rifle, 120 rounds of ammunition, an axe, a scrub knife, a spare uniform, and three months' supply of tobacco. The two white men each carried a notebook, compass, rifle, and revolver.

This disposition of the load meant that the twenty food-porters carried 800 pounds of tucker; sufficient to last the party of forty-five men for a fortnight.

Beyond that, the travellers would have to supplement their larder by trading for taro and sago in the native villages which they hoped to find as they journeyed.

During the four-day spello before leaving the camp in the foothills, the carriers were allowed to gorge and guzzle as much rice as their bellies would hold, from the surplus stores left over after the packs for the mountain trip were weighed and measured.

On 18 November the Great Hike started. Champion walked at the head of the laden line, with Karius bringing up the rear to prod on the laggards, prevent desertions, and guard against attack by hostile natives from that quarter.

The Palmer River was followed to its source, and after seven days the party crossed the ridge into the valley of the Bol, discovered by Champion during his reconnaissance in the previous expedition. This was the populous valley of Stone Age

primitives who considered Champion a god, and from whom he had learned that the "Wok Takin"—the Sepik River—was not far away, to the north.

There was tremendous excitement among the wild men of the Bol at the return of their hero from heaven.

The King of Bol, his prime minister, and all his subjects hugged Champion to their hearts, crooning "Seno! Num Seno!" (Friend, dear friend).

Karius was introduced—and hugged—camp was pitched, and a pow-wow began.

The King of Bol had a sad tale to tell. His capital city, Bolivip, had been raided and ravaged by foreign foes of a neighbouring nation. And, to make matters worse, there was a drought and taro was scarce.

The King and his ministers cried with shame as they explained that they had no "ung" (food) to present to their distinguished visitors.

This was a blow, because Karius and Champion had relied on replenishing their larder with plenty of pigs and taro at Bolivip.

The King cheered up when he was shown a steel adze. But he cheered down when he was told the price he would have to pay for it: to earn the adze he would have to pilot the party to the headwaters of Wok Takin, across the steep, stony, foodless and waterless ranges.

"Impossible!" he groaned, in the Bol lingo. With dramatic pantomime he showed that the path was barred by perpendicular walls and deep chasms. Only a hero could get through, he insisted.

Champion unpacked the large steel adze and showed its cutting power by slivering a log: "It's yours when you take us to the Takin!" he pantomimed.

The King wrestled with his soul, while his counsellors counselled caution. Then the King made up his mind.

"Follow me!" he grunted majestically, as he strode along the disused path leading into the mountain defiles.

It was dawn on Sunday, 27 November 1927, when the King of Bol led the way from Bol valley up the Dap mountain. For the first thousand feet the climb was up steep slopes, but beyond that the limestone cliffs rose sheer. Says Champion: "We no longer walked; we clambered, clinging to roots, to the trunks of trees,

over great boulders, now swinging across a chasm, now hanging by our arms alone as our feet sought a niche."

Ten men of Bol accompanied their King, to show the way among the precipices. On and up went the cliff climbers for hour after hour. Sometimes the perpendicular wall leaned over, and the climbers clung like flies on a ceiling as they scrambled for a ledge, while loose rocks, dislodged by their feet, shot down to bombard the long line of laden carriers below.

At ten o'clock Champion stood on the summit of the bluff and, two hours later, Karius tailed in behind the last of the panting porters. The aneroid showed 6500 feet above sea-level, which meant that the morning's climb had been one of 3000 feet from Bol valley. A heavy mist enveloped the summit of the bluff, and nothing could be seen of the configuration of the country ahead.

The air was bitterly cold. After a short spello and smoko the King of Bol strode on, followed by his ten subjects and his forty-five peripatetic guests. The track now led down from the bluff into the bed of a creek, named the Amil. Here were water-holes and a large cave, and camp was made in the late afternoon.

Next morning the plodders plodded up the creek, slipping and sliding on the water-worn boulders in the gorge. Then the gorge narrowed and became a ravine, with its nether end barred by a sheer wall—up which it was impossible for the burdened carriers to clamber. The police built a ladder of lawyer-cane and the packs were hauled to the summit by rattan ropes.

Onwards went the expedition up-creek, until the King of Bol indicated that they must now leave the watercourse and hike across dry mountains. Camp was made here, at an altitude of 7751 feet above sea-level. It was bitterly cold, and the carriers slept in a huddled phalanx by a fire.

At dawn the march-climb was resumed in icy rain whipped by a gusty blast. By 9 a.m. the aneroid showed a height of 8900 feet, but the travellers could see nothing of the landscape, as they were hemmed in by a mossy forest, the tops of the trees veiled in thick mist. After a midday meal in a limestone cave, the King of Bol again led the way uphill.

Now the going got really fierce. Champion describes it:

Worse and worse it grew; limestone rocks, with razor-like edges to clamber over; chasms twenty to thirty feet deep to cross by rotten tree-trunks, by thin saplings, or the roots of trees. These bridges were covered in moss . . . a false step would have meant falling into an



abyss and impalement on needle-pointed pinnacles of limestone. . . . We dared not take our eyes from the track for an instant; every step had to be watched, every sapling or tree-trunk tested.

In late afternoon a level patch was found, just big enough for a tent-fly, and camp was pitched—at 8300 feet above sea-level.

Next day, 30 November, after a waterless breakfast of johnny-cakes and cold rice, which had been cooked at the previous camp, the weary limestone plod was continued along a spur of the Victor Emanuel Range. Camp was made on a knoll, below which there was a tiny trickle of water from a rock.

That tiny trickle was the actual source of the Fly River, which reaches the sea, 700 miles away, as a twenty-mile-wide mammoth of rivers.

What a thrill for Karius and Champion, to be the first white men ever to reach the actual headwater spring of the mighty Fly! The aneroid showed the height of 8159 feet. They could see now that they were approaching the summit of the Divide.

On the following day, 1 December 1927, the mountaineers climbed in bitterly cold rain and wind, to a height of 9000 feet—and stood on the long-sought summit of the Divide. The King of Bol had led them to a gap in the main range. All around them mountains towered up to 12,000 feet.

Now the path trended downward on the north side, across frightful chasms spanned by saplings covered with slippery moss. It was eerie in the mist. The carriers began to wail that they could go no farther, and that they were ready to die . . . Suddenly the rain ceased, and lukewarm sunshine filtered through the fog. The sun got warmer; the forest thinned. Then the party stood on an open plateau, and gazed at the scene below.

“Wok Takin! Wok Takin!” said the King of Bol, standing dramatically on a rock and pointing to the north.

It was the valley of the Sepik River—their Promised Land. . . .

Below, the Sepik headwaters could be seen, winding through a grassy valley, with the smoke of many fires, indicating native villages. The police jumped with joy, and the dejected carriers forgot their weary legs and aching backs as they shouted:

“It’s all right! We are here! No more Devil Country!”

The King of Bol assured Karius and Champion that there would be plenty of dances and pig feasts in the villages below. And, says Champion: “the old rascal hinted that the ladies of

the district would be at the disposal of such distinguished visitors."

No wonder the carriers cheered up!

But there is a big difference between viewing a Promised Land and reaching it. Going down a limestone spur, Champion fell, and wrenched his knee. For the rest of the day he limped, as the party descended quickly and eagerly, passing from the limestone to open grassed declivities.

In the afternoon camp was made by the banks of a delightful pebbly stream, twenty-five yards wide and from two to three feet deep. This was the Takin, or Sepik, at 4735 feet above sea-level. From this point it flows north for more than 650 miles, swelling to a mighty stream almost as large as the Fly on the south.

Karius and Champion had achieved their objective of being the first white men to cross the central range of New Guinea, from the headwaters of the Fly to the headwaters of the Sepik. But they were still a long way from home. . . .

Now the King of Bol, having performed his part of the bargain as guide, demanded the promised payment. He was given the steel adze, with an eighteen-inch scrub knife for good measure. Says Champion: "Taking one bound towards the centre of the camp, the adze over one shoulder and the knife over the other, he performed a dance which resembled that of a hen scratching, at the same time singing a paeon to himself."

After this ballet the King and his personal guard went down-river to spend the night with the people of the Takin valley, to warn them of the strange visitors from heaven who had steel adzes, carried their houses (tents) like snails, on their backs, and made fire by striking a small piece of magic wood on a box.

Next day hundreds of the locals arrived to see these wonders for themselves. The King of Bol gave them a long harangue, warning the Takinites to provide their visitors with plenty of pigs and taro, and to give them safe-conduct and a good introduction to the people farther down the river. His oration concluded, the King shouldered his adze, beckoned to his ten guardsmen, and ran swiftly along the track back towards his own country, disappearing around a bend without a backward glance.

The friendly King was sadly missed as the party started a weary plod down-river. They found that the Sepik headwaters traversed a vast plateau, 4800 feet above sea-level, inhabited by

thousands of Stone Age men who had never previously seen, or heard of a white man.

These people dwell in tribes, or nations, each with its own district strictly defined, and each tribe speaking a language of its own. There is no intercourse between the tribes, except by way of war, rapine, and raid. The state of war is chronic and constant in this primitive paradise—just as in civilized Europe.

War and drought had ravaged the village gardens, and the white visitors and their cohorts could obtain neither food nor guidance as they trudged across the plateau for five days, following the banks of the stream, through rugged ravines, dense undergrowth, or tall grass—and wading through muddy tributary creeks.

On 7 December the party reached and waded waist-deep across a tributary river which they recognized from old German maps as the East River, discovered by Dr Thurnwald in 1911. This was the highest point explored by the Germans, and now Karius and Champion knew exactly where they were. They reckoned it would be another eleven days' march along the banks before they would be able to build rafts and take to the water to float downstream.

Food-supplies were low, and the spirits of the carriers were lower. Then Champion's knee got another nasty knock as he forded the East River. Throughout the afternoon he limped and the knee swelled. During the night it swelled enormously, and he became delirious with fever. He had to be carried on a stretcher. And later wrote:

It was a nightmare! For eleven days I practically lived in the stretcher, carried by four bearers, with every step they took an agonizing jolt of pain. They had to walk at a snail's pace, or I couldn't have endured it at all. My leg had to be kept higher than my head, as when the leg hung the pain became intolerable. My carriers with a police escort lagged behind the rest of the party. I was usually travelling from 12 to 13 hours a day between camps.

The track was still through very rough country, with cliffs to climb and descend. At one point it was necessary to cross the river, but wading or swimming was impossible for crippled Champion. The indomitable police boys set to work and constructed a New Guinea suspension bridge, made of lawyer-cane and rattan. This swaying structure was 120 feet long and forty feet above the river. A single strand of cane, one inch in diameter formed the footway of the bridge, with two handrails, one on

each side, about four feet above the footway, braced with cross-pieces of wood.

Champion's stretcher was lashed to the shoulders of two police constables, who then carried him across, doing the tight-rope act with their bare feet on the single-strand footway, while holding the side-canes with their hands.

A Ride on a Nightmare indeed for the man in the stretcher. But the incident illustrates the lion-hearted loyalty and ability of the native Papuan constabulary, whose efforts and energy were unflagging throughout the whole trip.

On 19 December Champion quitted his stretcher and hobbled along the track with the aid of two sticks and two policemen. Now the party had come to more level going, and—joy, oh joy!—there were pigs, pigeons, and cassowaries in the jungle, to supply meat for the larder.

Christmas Day 1927 found the wanderers in a vast sago swamp, hacking their way across country, following the German maps, to eliminate a curve in the river.

They reached the river again on 27 December, and—greatest joy of all—below this point the Sepik flowed broad and smooth, with no more rapids. The end of their footslog had come. Now they could raft to journey's end.

Weary feet and backs rested for eight days, while half the party made rafts and the rest made sago from sap, in preparation for the long downstream drift. But when the rafts were made and launched, they became waterlogged, and could not carry the burden imposed upon them. The pedestrian trudge was resumed for five days more through the awful sago swamp, where the scourge of dysentery attacked and weakened the weary wanderers.

Then salvation came, as scouts found a forest of "duduye" trees, which are cork-like and ideal for raft building. For five days the sound of axes rang as the duduye-trees were felled and lashed together to make five rafts. These were launched, with the party and stores aboard, on 17 January 1928. At this point Karius and Champion estimated they were 300 miles from the nearest government station, Ambunti, about 260 miles from the Sepik's mouth.

All day long the rafts drifted, on a seven-knot current, while the Sepik broadened to a great stream. Camp was made in late afternoon, but for one of the carriers it was an Everlasting Camp. Sick and weary, he quietly died at sundown, and was buried where he died—the only fatality of the expedition.

Next day at dawn the rafters continued to drift downstream. It was nearly four months since their departure from Daru to chug up the Fly, and it was more than three months since they had farewelled the *Elevala* at the limit of navigation.

Now they were drifting down the Sepik, on the other side of the range, their ambition fulfilled, of being the first white men to cross from mighty south-flowing river to mighty north-flowing river. . . . Champion will tell the climax of the story:

The rafts drifted around a bend. There came silence as intense as death. Karius and I gazed, fascinated, as at a phantom; we could not speak. For there, more than 500 miles up the Sepik, her white sides gleaming in the sun, her blue ensign floating gently from the mizzen, lay the *Elevala*, with her able commander Ritchie frantically waving his white shirt from the forecastle. The silence was broken by the sobs and hysterical laughter of the police and carriers who madly clutched at one another, and who then, with triumphant shouts, reached for the oars.

Aboard the *Elevala* Skipper Ritchie produced a bottle of champagne and two bottles of stout. The patrol men celebrated success with a Royal Shandy at ten o'clock in the morning.

So the classic journey of Karius and Champion came to a triumphant end. After leaving them at the head of navigation on the Fly, the *Elevala* had chugged downstream for 580 miles to the Gulf of Papua, and then had gone via Port Moresby, Salamaua, and Madang, following the coast right around to the mouth of the Sepik on the north coast of New Guinea—and then had chugged upstream 500 miles to the limit of navigation, there to await the mountain-crossers.

As the crow flies, they had traversed only two degrees of latitude (120 miles) in three months from leaving the *Elevala* at the head of navigation on the Fly.

But they were not crows, and they didn't fly. The distance traversed was over 300 miles, through previously unexplored country. And most of the miles was vertical, up and down miles.

"Only a patrol, in the ordinary course of our duty," said both Karius and Champion.

Only a patrol! "Hats off to the patrol officers," is a saying in the Territories. "If the spears don't get them, the fever will."

What about a monument to Karius and Champion—the Burke and Wills of New Guinea?

## CHAPTER XI

THE wind dropped, the sun dropped, the anchor of the *Panawina* dropped, and I dropped off to sleep in the estuary of the Fly River, while gnat-gnats hummed a symphony outside my gnat-gnat net.

In the morning the sun rose, my temperature rose, and I rose—to gaze at the nipa palms of Mibu Island.

Soon we came near the anchored government launch *Vailala*.

“Engine he buggerup,” explained the native coxswain.

Aboard the *Vailala* was Mr Leo Austen, Resident Magistrate of the Western Division, one of the pioneer pathfinders of the Upper Fly district, representative of the might, majesty, dominion, and power of the Commonwealth of Australia in a territory of 39,000 square miles of swamp, sago, and savages—King of the Fly.

Aboard the *Vailala* I lunched with the R.M. Born in Brisbane, 1894, he served with the 7th Field Artillery at the landing on Gallipoli, was afterwards knocked at Pozières. Recovered, got his commission, and was demobilized in 1919.

That same year he joined the Papuan patrol, and has been patrolling ever since. Some of his expeditions up the Fly have been told in the previous chapter, but there are many more, as life for him has been one damp patrol after another.

In 1927 he visited Sydney and gained his Diploma in Anthropology, then spent five years in the Trobriand Isles off eastern Papua, in specialized anthropological research, writing monographs on megalithic structures, legends, seasonal gardening and other habits of the Trobrianders.

Then he studied head dancing on the Turama River, making explorations in the hinterland of the Kikori delta. Finally he was transferred and promoted to his old station at Daru, with the Fly River as his demesne.

His district is one-third of the total area of Papua, with a native population of about 40,000, of whom 20,000 are under full government control; the rest are partly controlled and sometimes patrolled.

The Magistrate is peripatetic, and ranges far and wide in the *Vailala* to bring the Gospel of Gubment to the dwellers in the thatched houses. There is no industry worth mentioning in the Western Division, except labour recruiting for the Thursday Island pearling-fleet; and no white planters have ventured up the Fly, which has swampy banks for hundreds of miles.

"The upper region would be suitable in parts for white settlement," says Magistrate Leo, "but the distance to markets is too great."

He has hopes of introducing rice cultivation along the swampy shores of the rivers as he has discovered wild rice in the swamps of the Aramia. If this could be crossed with tame rice to produce a larger seed he says: "there is a vast area available for rice-growing to open up this district, which at present helps little in the economic life of Papua."

The Magistrate's job is to establish lines of communication with the inland savages, and bring them under control. Murray's policy was to leave them undisturbed in their primitive customs, except for head-hunting, which the Gubment bars--unsportingly, I think. No taxes are paid by the inland savages, but £600 a year is collected from the coastal dwellers who make money by indentured labour and trade.

The natives around Daru have a markedly Jewish cast of features with a distinct Semitic schnozzle. Some missionaries believe them to be one of the lost ten tribes of Israel, but anthropologist Austen thinks the Semitic strain may have come from Arab traders, enthusiastically spreading the polygamous gospel of Mahomet centuries ago.

Mangroves line the Fly River for 200 miles from its source. Beyond that wild sugar-cane grows, and it is possible that sugar cultivation would be a great success--if the White Australia policy didn't stop it. Natives come down from the hills to the river-bank in the dry season, gorge on sugar, burn the cane, and take back the stalks to the hills when the rains commence.

Studying the habits of the natives is a fascinating life work of Magistrate Austen. He told me that in October, when the lagoons are drying, wild geese, ducks, and bush pigs come down in myriads to eat fish floundering in the drying mud of the swamps. Then is a time of great joy among the natives, who leave their villages and camp along the lagoons and vast reedy swamps to gorge on game, pork and fish.

Many strange things come down the Fly to the sea. In Dutch

New Guinea, on the Digoel River, is a camp for native communists, agents of Moscow, who have stirred up mutiny and insurrection among the Dutch Fleet in the Isles of Spice. Several of these have escaped, braved the jungle, and boated down-Fly to its mouth—only to be captured at Daru and returned to custody at Merauke, the nearest Dutch police village, on the south side of Dutch New Guinea.

While Magistrate Austen was giving me this information, Skipper Teddy and his crew connected a pipe-line from the *Panawina's* engine to the *Vailala's*, and for seven hours vainly tried to pump air into the auxiliary air-compressor engine, which had a broken spring in the outlet valve. As fast as the air was pumped in, the broken spring forced it back, and Teddy's language was more compressed than the air. At midnight he gave it up as hopeless, and the two vessels lay side by side, anchors out, rolling gently on the estuarine surge.

Suddenly a howling "guba" (a monsoonal gale) shot across the Fly, and the two vessels banged, tossed, and smashed into each other.

"All hands on deck! Start the engines, Maniara! Throw off the hawsers!" bawled Teddy, and soon we were drawing free of the helpless *Vailala*, as the wind roared and the rain poured, and a wet time was had by all.

With the dawn, the guba had abated and the compressor pipes were again linked, in a vain attempt to get 300 pounds pressure into the air bottles on the Magistrate's engines.

But still it blew back harder than a guba; at 2 p.m. Teddy was still tinkering and blowing off.

I was on the *Vailala* yarning to Magistrate Leo, when up came another bonny guba, and off went the *Panawina*, Cluneless, scuttling for shelter like a scalded skunk into Mibu Creek, and towing the *Vailala*. Alas, for Teddy. He bumped a mud-bank; the *Panawina* tilted and stuck; and as the tide ebbed both boats were helpless in the howling rain. Ashore went a boatload of boys, ten in number, with axes and tomahawks to cut spars, then they waded to the *Panawina*, propped her upright and there she was, a mud wreck, to await the rising tide six hours hence. From the flagstaff the silver-starred flag of Papua flapped in the storm.

So I spent another watery night stranded on the Fly. Next day the *Panawina* pushed on, leaving the *Vailala* to hoist sails and cruise back to Daru.



Aboard the *Panawina*, now tilted to forty degrees, I waited for the tide to rise. We had a risky supper, eating soup at this angle—but there was no trouble in drinking beer from a tin.

Gradually she straightened from her lady-like lounge as the tide rose. Many a time I've been bogged on the blacksoil plains of Bourke; this, however, is the first time I've ever been bogged at sea.

We reversed through fluid mud on to the yellow bosom of the estuary, tooted farewell to the *Vailala* and headed upstream along a shore thick with mangroves projecting spider-legged tentacles into the ooze.

A patrol officer's life is a fish to mouth existence. They live on the lean of the land; I haven't met one with a prosperity paunch.

I asked Teddy if he liked native sago. He said it was dreadful tack. He had tried it with chocolate, curry, sardines—and rum—but nothing improved it. "Still, the boys like it," he added, "better even than rice."

The day is beautiful. We start with a breakfast of tinned pork sausages, smothered in fried eggs donated by Magistrate Leo.

This country is the Land of Swap, as well as the Land of Dohori (wait-a-bit); but swapping seems to be the main occupation of whites and natives when they meet.

Whenever you pay a visit out comes the gin and sipora—a lemon with a limey taste—to flavour the gin. Then when the visitors return you trot out a can of beer, and you swap your surplus tucker, or gear, for something the other fellow can spare, while swapping yarns, true and tall.

In this land of no newspaper, a gossip is a godsend; everybody knows what everybody else is doing, hundreds of miles apart.

Although the estuary was fairly calm, much to my surprise I began to get *mal de mer* after meals. I thought it must be the sipora, as never before had I suffered from nautical nausea. Now I got it thrice daily. Teddy's boys looked pityingly at me, as perseveringly I sat down for each meal, and ditto arose hastily to dispose of each tinned culinary triumph.

By 1 p.m. we were sixty miles up the Fly, and Teddy said: "It's the same for another two hundred miles—have you seen enough mangroves?" I had, so the skipper put about, and we ran

back along the northern shore towards the ocean, dropping the "pick" near the village of Koriomoro.

We went ashore in the boat—part of the way—and finished with a four-furlong wade through mangroves and mud, infested with crabs and Johnny-Jumpers. J-J is a fish that runs on land, floundering with its flappers and scuttling in the mud when it tires of swimming. Teddy and I did some johnny-jumping over slippery trees across muddy creeks, where tracks of crocodiles patterned the slime, and at last reached the village.

In front of the village was the Magistrate's house, a thatched pavilion about twenty feet square reserved for the use of visiting whites. We were met by the V.P.—alias the Village Policeman—a man who had learned his trade as an armed constable at Port Moresby and has now returned to his native village as the representative of law and order. With him were four grave-looking gentlemen of weight, clad in blue lap-laps and jerseys. Across the chest of his jersey, each had the word "Councillor" embroidered in red letters two inches high.

These Councillors are elected by the tribe, and supplied with their uniform by the Gubment. They are also named "Quinces", "Tins", "Kings", and "Saddles", by villagers who get tongue-twisted with the consonants of "Councillor". Their duty is "to make suggestions for the improvement of village life or of native life generally".

Sir Hubert was very proud of his Village Councils; he claimed it was a method of "indirect rule". His main desire was to avoid "undue interference by the Government with the social side of Papuan life", and he declared that "the guiding principle of indirect rule is the preservation of native customs".

Stuck on a pole at the entrance to the village was a conch-shell, which one of the Councillors put to his lips and blew loudly to warn the inhabitants of our intention to visit their domicile.

The village itself was only a one-roomed house. But what a room! It was the biggest I've ever seen, two hundred yards long. In fact it's called a "long-house" or "dubu". Its walls and roof of thick thatch were like a tunnel raised on stilts, fifteen feet above mud-level. We clambered up a ladder, and entering the front door, could see right through to the back door, far away at the other end.

The compartment was divided into cubicles separated by a corridor, with a family in each cubicle exactly like bees in a

honeycomb. As we walked through the interior, dimly lit by chinks in the thatch, we could see the women of the dubu, babies at breast, cooking the evening meal, on fireplaces of caked mud in the cubicles. The sanitary system was simple, all rubbish and filth was dropped through holes in the floor to fall into the mud, and be flushed away by the tides.

The fireplaces of mud are about six feet in length and a couple of inches thick, and have a cavity in which a small fire of sticks smoulders, filling the dubu with smoke and smells, as on many of the fires pieces of pig were slowly roasting.

Other housewives were varying the menu with crab hamburger. I watched a Koriomoro belle, clad only in a vee of fibre, with babe at nipple, preparing this culinary treat. Squatted before her stone, she mixed a handful of scraped coco-nut with a handful of raw pink sago and flavoured the compound with a chopped-up crab, all mixed to a dry mash. Then she demonstrated potless cookery by wrapping the mash in a palm leaf and placing the green packet on the embers in the middle of her stone to bake. The greenness of the palm would stop the contents from burning, until they were more or less baked.

In the next cubicle the cook wasn't cooking at all. A babe was suckling at one breast and a piglet at the other. She was full-bosomed, and had plenty of lactic juice for her dual sucklers. Treat 'em all alike, was her maternal motto—bipeds and quadrupeds.

On we went carefully over loose bamboo poles laid on the floor, past snarling dogs held by their owners, and cubicle after cubicle where babies squatted midst the noise of coco-nut scraping for the sago-pig compote. The stench of primitive Papua was in my nostrils as I came gratefully to the back door and emerged from the gloom into the glare of day.

It was a good specimen of Sir Hubert Murray's policy of keeping the Papuans primitive. The difference between the Stone Age and the Iron Age is a pot of boiling water. All the habits of these people, after seventy years' contact with whites, are still based on broiling, not boiling, their food.

There never has been such a thing as a cannibal cauldron. All the cartoonists of the world have misled the public by depicting missionaries as the *pièce de résistance* in a cannibal stew.

The fact is cannibals don't stew their meals; they grill them on hot stones. The origin of the tasty hamburger is the flat stone

hearth of a cannibal. Missionary hamburger maybe; but stew—no, never!

Outside the dubu I saw some Fly River canoes—hollowed logs up to thirty feet long, with outriggers to stop them from toppling in the tidal surge. These vessels make long trips up-river for barter of stone and firewood. They venture also into the coastal creeks in quest of fresh drinking-water, and sago for the tribe.

I returned in state to the *Panawina*, propelled in a canoe by six paddle-wielders. Behind us came half a dozen canoes loaded to the gunwale with sago, bananas, coco-nuts, crabs, and a vegetable named “godibu”.

Papua being the land of swap, Skipper Teddy providored the launch by bartering for the food, tobacco and kerosene, for the proud possessors of lamps bought with indentured service of savages at Thursday Island.

That night I enjoyed a feed of Fly River crab, juiced over with sipora, followed with godibu (which tastes like maize but looks like the yellow heart of a lily), and topped off with bananas and coco-nuts. It was the first meal I had kept down for two days.

Experienced Teddy now diagnosed my *mal de mer* as “coastal fever. They get the same inland,” he sympathized. “Only they get shakes with it.” Teddy is a master of racy idiom; as he tinkered with the engine he called his ship the “*Spannerwina*”.

Next morning we nosed our way out of the Fly and coast-hugged the mangroves past Naviu Island into the mouth of the Bamu River, where we threaded our way through a maze of mud-banks between the channels of the Bamu Isles—long, low banks of mud and sand covered with mangroves which are semi-submerged at high tide.

It was an anxious trip for Teddy as the mud-banks are movable. On the starboard bow of the “*Spannerwina*” stood the lead-swinger, brown torso gleaming in the sun, bare feet gripping the deck, right hand gripping the lead-line, peering ahead among the mud shoals.

He swings the fourteen-pound lead like a pendulum to gain momentum, then casts it ahead, hangs on as the *Panawina* progresses, and notes the depth when the line comes vertical.

The line is marked at fathom intervals with different coloured calico strips reeved through the strands. At the first fathom is a

red strand, at the second a white strand, and the third fathom a blue strand.

"Mark three!" yells the leadsman, meaning three fathoms, and Teddy's happy to know we have eighteen feet of water beneath us, as we bowl along at half speed.

Then the water muddied.

"Mark two!" said the leadswinger suddenly, and Teddy was not so happy.

"Mark one!" was the next report, and the skipper looked serious as he yelled:

"Quarter speed, and make it snappy!"

We edged our way over the Bamu bar.

"Mark one . . . same mark . . . same mark . . ." droned the pendulum caster, as the wind got up on our beam, and we began to roll in a choppy swell.

"Half fathom!" yelled the leadsman.

"Stop the engines! bawled Teddy. But it was too late, and we bogged with a bump.

Lurid idiom from Skipper Teddy as we reversed, backed out of the bank, and sought a fresh channel, cautiously feeling our way forward.

For an hour we played hide-and-seek, searching for a channel, till at last the leadswinger exultingly yelled:

"By the mark four!"

We had breasted the bar.

The choppy waves of the Bamu mouths started my coastal fever, dog's disease, *mal de mer*, nausea, or whatever complaint I had.

Newton pontificated in his dissertation on gravity that "What goes up must come down", but if he'd studied gravitation in Papua, he could have amplified his theory and said: "What goes down must come up."

Here I am alternately feeding the fishes of the Bamu estuary and lying under the awning, full of fever. I am also trying to read *Pioneering in New Guinea* by the Rev. James Chalmers.

The Rev. Chalmers tells of his adventuring along this very coast in 1887 in search of fuzzy-topped souls to save. He describes how at one village the natives expressed surprise at the softness of his skin. After that, he would not let them touch him again "as they might take a fancy to cooked feet and breast".

Observant Chalmers noted: "The daintiest dish here is man,

and it is considered that only fools refuse and despise it." Some fools are very particular.

We passed Bell Point and chugged across the wide mouth of the Turama River, my pulse throbbing worse than the engines of the "*Spannerwina*". The crew were getting excited at the prospect of going ashore at our next port of call—Dopima village on Goaribari Isle off the Kikori delta.

One of the boys was having his fuzzy hair pronged with a wooden fork, to make his permanent wave wavier. By the time his mates had finished pronging, his peroxidized coiffure bellied out like a cauliflower—a prize one at the Royal Show—all ready to dazzle the girls of Goaribari in the dubu of Dopima.

At 2.15 p.m. we dropped anchor at Dopima. And thereby hangs a tale—for Dopima is one of the most history-soaked and blood-drenched villages of the Papuan coast.

When Captain Blackwood in H.M.S. *Fly* sailed up the head of the gulf in May 1845, he gave the romantic name of "Pigville" to a village in this vicinity—probably identical with Dopima.

Says the chronicler of his expedition: "As it would never do to have an unknown number of savages prowling round us all night, Captain Blackwood determined to take advantage of the first act of hostility on their part, to punish them severely and give them a lesson."

At dusk on 29 May a crowd of canoes approached the ship, and two arrows whizzed. "Captain Blackwood then gave the word to fire, and there was a general discharge, several of the men loading again and firing without orders, and before it could be stopped I daresay thirty muskets had been fired."

So the daring Dopimites of Pigville were taught their first lesson of the potency of white men's gunpowder.

After that the Pigvillains were undisturbed for thirty-two years. Then the London Missionary Society got busy and sent their pioneer Bible bearer, the Rev. James Chalmers, into the head of the gulf. He visited a hundred villages and was horrified to find the natives addicted to cannibalism, polygamy, sorcery, and many other unchristian practices.

For twenty-three years Tamate Chalmers cruised up and down the Papuan shores, in and out the estuaries and deltas of many a stream: the Fly, the Bamu, the Turama, the Kikori, the Purari, the Vailala, the Lakekamu. His leonine head, with its curly hair

and spade beard, poised on broad shoulders was well known from the dubus of Goaribari to the thatched huts of the Motus.

Making trips to England in 1886 and 1894 he was the idol of the faithful, heroized as a torch-bearer of the Gospel, his lectures attended by thousands eager to hear of the spread of British religion in dark parts of the world.

Tamate as protagonist of the missionaries was relentlessly opposed to British annexation and labour recruiting. Despite missionary protests, however, Papua was annexed, and under the long reign of Sir William MacGregor, from 1888 to 1898, the L.M.S. were encouraged and protected by Gubment.

Sir William departed and George Le Hunte became Lieutenant-Governor on 23 March 1899. Governors come and Governors go, but Tamate went on forever. His wife, Sara Eliza, who travelled with him on many of his cruises died at sea on 25 October 1900 and was buried at Daru Island.

Bereaved Tamate carried on with his work. On 4 April 1901 he left Daru for yet another cruise among the cannibals at the head of the gulf, in the London Missionary Society's schooner *Niue*.

Four days later the *Niue* anchored near the village of Dopima. As usual, a large party of canoes came out to surround the schooner with coco-nuts and bananas to barter.

Tamate decided to go ashore Bible in hand, but otherwise unarmed.

With him in the whaleboat went the Rev. Oliver Tomkins and ten mission natives from the Fly River. It was seven in the morning of 8 April 1901. Tamate said he'd be back in about half an hour for breakfast.

The whaleboat disappeared among the mangroves in a creek near Dopima long-house, and the skipper of the *Niue* waited patiently until midday. But the whaleboat never returned.

Meanwhile the *Niue* was still surrounded by canoes, so the skipper up-anchored and moved off half a mile.

The canoes moved with him.

Still no sign of Tamate and his eleven companions, and during the afternoon the canoeists boarded the schooner and looted it of everything portable. Lucky to escape with his life, the skipper and his small crew sailed all around the island looking for the whaleboat. They remained in the vicinity all night.

Next day there was still no sign of the whaleboat or the twelve

in it. On shore the natives "were naked, and had on their war-paint, and were yelling the whole of the time".

Seven days later the *Niue* reached Daru, and reported to Mr A. H. Jiear, Sub-Collector of Customs, that Chalmers, Tomkins and ten Christian natives were in the hands of the Goaribari cannibals.

From all the circumstances it was evident that the whole of the mission party had been murdered. It was too late to rescue them—but not too late to punish the criminals.

The Queensland Government sent the S.S. *Parua* with twelve men of the Royal Australian Artillery to Daru, where they were joined by eighteen armed native constables.

Meanwhile Lieutenant-Governor Le Hunte mustered a strong armed party and left Port Moresby on 28 April in the steamer *Merrie England* for the scene of the crime.

The two vengeance ships arrived at Goaribari Island on 2 May, twenty-four days after the disappearance of the missionaries. What happened next is told in a telegram from Lieutenant-Governor Le Hunte to the Governor of Queensland:

Boats landed at three villages simultaneously, natives immediately commenced hostilities. We fired on them and occupied villages, total killed twenty-four, and three wounded. Captured one prisoner and obtained information mission party all killed and eaten and whaleboat broken up.

The prisoner Kemere was put through the "Merrie England" degree and confessed he was an eyewitness of the massacre. He said the people of ten villages made a plot to capture and eat the missionaries and loot the schooner. As Chalmers and Tomkins entered the long-house they were both knocked on the heads with stone clubs. Chalmers was also stabbed with a cassowary dagger. The Christian natives were also clubbed and the heads of all the party including Chalmers and Tomkins were cut off.

Eyewitness Kemere declared through an interpreter that: "Some men cut the bodies up and handed the pieces over to women to cook, which they did, mixing the flesh with sago. They were eaten the same day. The heads were divided among various individuals."

After hearing this deposition Governor Le Hunte sent another armed party ashore and burned down the long-houses in the ten villages named by the informer. His men also destroyed a large number of fighting canoes, but couldn't get any prisoners, as the



cannibals vamoosed into the mangroves—taking with them the souvenired heads of the mission party.

Governor Le Hunte concluded his dramatic telegram: "Regret nature of punishment, but action absolutely necessary at once, and best in the end. There will be no further fighting or burning. I am satisfied this is the last massacre of this kind on coast of British New Guinea."

So retribution was achieved, but what of the heads?

The missionary world, shocked and horrified by the death of a Gospel-hero-martyr, demanded the recovery of the sacred heads of Chalmers and Tomkins for a Christian burial. Two years went by without any effort being made to recover the relics. Then Lieutenant-Governor Le Hunte departed from Papua on 9 June 1903. He was succeeded by Judge Christopher S. Robinson, a brilliant young Queenslander, son of Archdeacon Robinson of Brisbane, as Acting-Administrator.

The Archdeacon's son determined that the heads of Chalmers and Tomkins should be recovered, even at this late date, for the very good reason that it was bad for morale that white men's skulls should be treasured in a dubu-house. It was a challenge to a crusader, like the True Cross in the hands of the Saracens, a magnet to attract the zealous with the glitter of a Holy Grail.

Missionaries filled the ear of the Archdeacon's son, and sooled him on to recover the sacred relic from its ghoulish surroundings in the secret recesses of the dubu of Dopima. The Acting-Administrator was also urged by his fellow civil servants, and by his sense of justice to bring the actual murderers to trial—their names were known from the depositions of the informer Kemere.

Late in February 1904 the *Merrie England*, with Administrator Robinson, set course for Goaribari. With him were Arthur Jewell, Government Secretary, A. H. Jiear, Resident Magistrate of the Western Division, W. C. Bruce, Commandant of the Native Constabulary, and a strong force of native police, in addition to the white officers and crew.

On 6 March 1904 the government ship clanked anchor at Dopima and waited for something to happen.

Cautiously the cannibals crept in their canoes towards the white man's "big fella canoe", wondering whether they were going to be massacred again. But Robinson had a ruse to allay their suspicion. He was doing the old blackbirding trick, as he

displayed calico, beads, knives, and mirrors and enticed the fuzzy-tops on deck to barter.

Star passenger of the *Merrie England* was Kemere, the Goaribari man, who had been captured by Governor Le Hunte in May 1901, on the first punitive expedition. Kemere the Informer had been an eyewitness to the murder of Chalmers, Tomkins and party. He waited on deck and pointed out to the native police half a dozen individuals whom he said had helped to kill the missionaries.

"Grab them!" ordered Robinson suddenly, and the armed constables pounced upon their prey.

"Treachery!" bawled the men of Goaribari, when they saw their six mates pinioned—captured as they thought for grilling.

Now there was merrie hell on the *Merrie England*, as the bowmen in canoes opened a sharp fusillade of arrow fire. The men of the *Merrie England* returned the fire with rifles, and all hands joined in the affray.

The first shot was fired by a corporal of the native constabulary who winged a canoer in the act of aiming an arrow at the ship's captain.

As the report reverberated round the ship, every man jack with a gun—black and white, mate and bosun, Administrator and Commandant—went into action wildly firing at the bowmen, who were wildly retreating. The native police went berserk, taking special delight in practising musketry. They came from Kiwai Island, and their relatives were the mission boys with Chalmers who had been masticated on 8 April 1901, when they went ashore to the cannibal hut at breakfast-time.

Vigorously the fusillade followed the fleeing canoeists. There was many a pot-shot at black heads bobbing in the green waves, as the startled heathens dived from their canoes and the deck of the steamer to swim for the shore.

Burly Commandant Bruce was the only man who kept his head; he dashed around the deck, clouting the constabulary to make them cease fire.

At last there was silence. Blood was swabbed from the decks, and the Goaribari affray ended as the *Merrie England* up-anchored and steamed from the estuary, leaving the widows loud in lament.

When the government party returned to Port Moresby there was

much boasting by the native police of the merrie time had by all, in the massacre.

These tales soon reached the ears of the Rev. Charles Abel of the London Missionary Society stationed at Kwato near Samarai. He decided to raise Cain. Although the government party had been avenging the death of Missionary Chalmers, the procedure did not appeal to Missionary Abel. He sped south to kick up a row with the Commonwealth Government, the legal overlord of British New Guinea since 18 March 1902.

At Cooktown the Rev. Abel was unable to restrain his indignation as he filled the ears of the reporters with a lurid tale of the hearsay horrors of Goaribari.

"Nothing less than a Royal Commission will satisfy the European population of Port Moresby," quoth the clergyman.

He didn't mention that the European population of the Port at the time consisted of thirty-eight males and eighteen females including children, or that most of them were government officials, some of whom had taken part in the shooting.

The Australian papers, glad of this sensational sequel to the "Chalmers Incident", revelled in the gory stories of Goaribari. The Rev. Abel achieved his ambition of becoming headline news.

The newspapers, always ready to champion the cause of the oppressed—when a horrible tale hangs to it—clamoured for more heads to roll, and demanded the recall of the Administrator.

Yielding to the clamour of the presshounds, the Commonwealth Government decided to recall Administrator Robinson to Sydney for an inquiry, and appointed Captain F. R. Barton, Resident Magistrate of the Central Division, as Administrator in his stead.

Events moved quickly to a tragic climax.

The new Administrator, on 16 June 1904, wrote a letter to his superseded predecessor, Christopher Robinson, informing him that a Royal Commission had been appointed to inquire into the "Affray at Goaribari Island", and stating that he would be required to give evidence, but would be at liberty to brief counsel if he so wished.

Both men were staying at Government House, Port Moresby.

For three days Robinson brooded over this blow to his ambitions and the disgrace of being sacked and superseded by a junior magistrate. Then, in the early morning of 20 June a shot was fired. The staff of Government House rushed into the garden.

Says Captain Barton: "I got up and saw something white on

the grass near the flagstaff. It was Robinson, revolver in hand, still breathing, but unconscious."

The coroner returned the verdict that the ex-Administrator had "committed suicide, while temporarily insane". Thus, the first Australian-born Administrator of Papua died a victim to the newspaper hunger for sensation, fed by the mumbles of a maundering missionary. Christopher Robinson preferred death to dishonour and went out like an officer and a gentleman.

It was a tragic climax to the Chalmers incident. The ghosts of grisly Goaribari were appeased by the sacrifice of "Number One White Man" of the land—Robinson the Crusader.

The Royal Commission was duly held in Sydney a month later, on 25 July. But dead men yell no tales, and the principal witnesses—Chalmers and Robinson—were absent.

A lot of government money was spent, a lot of witnesses got free trips from Port Moresby to Sydney, the Bible was frequently kissed, tens of thousands of words of deposition were solemnly printed.

The presiding Judge was Charles Edward Robertson Murray. He presented his report to Parliament on 13 September 1904—a masterly analysis of conflicting evidence.

Alas! The most important witness, Judge Robinson, had gone to a higher tribunal; but in his absence Judge Murray coldly dissected the truth of the affray with the gulpers of Goaribari. He reported that "some 260 shots would appear to have been discharged" during the affray and that "at least eight natives were killed on the spot". He believed Commandant Bruce's evidence that "the firing lasted about seven minutes" and commended him for "using his great physical strength to compel his men to cease firing".

Seeing it from the native point of view, the Judge blamed Administrator Robinson for "treacherously" seizing the prisoners after inveigling them on deck. Though blaming Robinson the Royal Commission declared: "It would be unfair to draw the conclusion that his suicide was the result of a feeling of guilt. His errors were the result of over zeal."

His suicide was partly due to the fact "that he was weakened by illness".

While the Royal Commission on the Affray at Goaribari was sitting in solemn conclave the skull of Tamate Chalmers was still

adorning the dubu of Dopima, where it had reposed since April 1901—an object of pride and envy to head-hunters from far and wide.

The newly appointed Head of Papua, Captain Barton, undeterred by the hoodoo of the head, steamed in the *Merrie England* to Goaribari and anchored there on 18 March 1905.

Aboard the vessel he had two of the six prisoners captured by Robinson twelve months previously.

Says Barton: "At first no canoe would approach within hail of the ship."

No wonder.

But Barton's object was palaver—not punishment. He sent the two hostages ashore to inform the people that the Government wanted Tamate's skull, and would seek it by peaceful means.

Giving the villagers all night to think it over Barton went ashore next morning but found the Dopimites were "inclined to stand somewhat aloof".

No wonder.

But Barton's party were invited to enter the daimu (bachelors' house behind the long-house) and there on a mat was a skull, which informer Kemere and the hostages "affirmed to be that of one of the murdered missionaries".

The skull was handed over to the London Missionary Society at Daru, and was reverently buried there in the grave of Mrs Chalmers with the inscription: "The noble army of martyrs praise Thee."

So ended the most sensational story in Papua's history beginning with the martyrdom of a missionary and ending with the suicide of an Administrator.

## CHAPTER XII

THE engine of the *Panawina* stopped throbbing, but my head didn't, as we went ashore to the historic village of Dopima (alias Pigville) the home of community feasts on foreigners.

Out came the canoes to meet us, as they came to greet Tamate forty years ago.

All the old men of the village remember the incident quite well. They say it was all Tamate's fault as he should not have entered the dubu without being invited. He knew what he was risking, because he had written: "The daintiest dish here is man, and it is considered that only fools refuse and despise it."

The people of Dopima were no fools.

The canoes which greeted us were just logs hollowed to a shell, which rolled in a choppy sea, and each end of the log was plugged by a bare black bottie keeping out the water.

We went ashore surrounded by a horde of cannibals and scions of cannibals, reformed I hoped.

The population of Dopima is 300, all living in one long-house, which I paced 190 yards. The women are comely and near nude, wearing only a tight-fitting vee of nipa-palm fibre instead of the skirts of rami-grass worn at Port Moresby.

Female fashions change from district to district throughout Papua, depending on the flora of the vicinity. The Goaribari belles with their shame-belts of fibre are as near nude as any strip-tease torturess of Broadway. But their nudity is natural, and they practise gymnosophy without affectation, their nakedness relieved only thinly by necklaces and armlets of pigs' tusks and mother-of-pearl.

When I stepped ashore fully clothed among these naked people I felt like a "peeping Tom" but soon realized that where nakedness is normal peeping Toms have no need to peep. Over the doors of the Pigville dubu were a score of pigs' jaws bleaching in the sun. Half a dozen dead pigs freshly arrowed lay in the shade awaiting a wedding feast scheduled for that night.

A couple of hunters were standing near by, proud of their

trophies of the chase. They are the specialists who, armed with long bows and quivers of arrows, fare forth like Tarzans into the jungle to shoot wild boars for the hearths of the dubu.

Each of the hunters wore a rattan gauntlet from wrist to elbow, protection against chafing of the bow-string, and their legs were encased from ankle to knee in gaiters of woven rattan as armour against jungle snakes.

On their heads were circlets of cassowary plumes (insignia of the hunt) and on their left upper arms were bracelets, to hold daggers made from cassowary thigh-bones. These are to give the *coup de grâce* to an arrowed pig or foeman. They were chewing green betel-nuts, macerated with shell lime dipped from a polished calabash, and expectorating copiously.

Clambering up a ladder of rounded poles lashed with rattan—sometimes—and polished slippery by the feet of countless dubu dwellers, I stood on a staging made of sago-bark strips laid crosswise on rattan joists, with many a crack between to trip the heedless walker.

This was about as far as Tamate got, when death struck him before breakfast.

But I had no cause to fear that I would become Papuan pabulum, despite the longing looks cast by the elders at my juicy undercuts, sirloins, and bladebone steaks. The Dopimites are reformed, and I was led into the dubu by an elderly ex-cannibal wearing an aluminium medal with the words "Territory of Papua Councillor".

The Village Councillors try petty offences, but send all serious crimes to the Resident Magistrate of the district for trial by white man's justice.

Alas for progress! He wore a guernsey with a zipper fastener, tight-fitting on his torso, but his loins were clad with a kilt of beaten bark, old style.

The cubicles lining the dubu were different from those I had seen at the village on the Bamu, as many of them had semi-civilized bamboo doors hinged and fastened with strips of rattan.

The fireplaces of mud here were packed into shells of hollowed wood, but the same kind of cookery was being done on ember fires of tiny sticks, with cooks suckling babes as they toasted crab compotes.

Dogs barked and children cried as I blondined through the dubu, to the centre where my guide paused dramatically and pointing said: "Gubble, gubble, gubble!"

Anyway it sounded like that, but I could tell by the note in his voice that he was very proud of what he was pointing at.

I had reached the heart of the dubu. Leaning against the wall were some beautifully carved oval slabs, six feet high, coloured with mystic designs and outlines of human faces.

"Gubble!" pleaded my guide.

I raised my eyes, and stepped back aghast at the sight of a rack full of grinning skulls, with white shells in their eye-sockets, and red-ochred pigs' tusks in their noses. These grinning death's-heads are souvenirs of the good old days which a kindly Government permits the Goaribaris to retain for sentiment's sake.

This Shrine of Skulls, this altar of Golgotha, is the Sacred Place of the tribe. Gone are the cadavers of yester year, but their craniums remain as a memorial of picnics of the past.

The old men of the tribe know the names of each of the skulls and smack their lips reminiscently, as they think to themselves: "Emai had a nice juicy ham; Wahaga's tibia was tasty, Kantiri's kidney went well with sago; Baimai's brains minced well with coco-nut; but the best of the lot was Aran from Turotere village, his rib roasts were as tender as a baby!"

The idea of the cannibals is to honour a dead man by absorbing him and thus perpetuating his good qualities throughout the tribe. In their primitive state cannibals see no harm whatever in man-eating; and they still don't understand the scruples of squeamish Christianity which allows nourishing food to be wasted.

It was in such a rack of skulls as this that the head of Tamate grinned for four years until Barton took it away for burial. The punitive expedition of Governor Le Hunte burned down the original dubu of Dopima, but the skull of the missionary was hidden in the bush at that time.

Just as the primitive Motus of Port Moresby waved the hairs of Tubby's beard over their yams to make them grow big, so the Goaribaris ate Chalmers in the hope that his strength, knowledge, and cleverness would penetrate the tribe, and help them to beat hell out of their neighbours.

Not bad reasoning either.

I left the Shrine of Skullduggery and mooched reflectively along the dubu corridor sniffing the saucy smells that only housewives can generate. The dubu is a housewives' paradise. No pots to boil food, no plates or forks or spoons to wash.



I pitied the civilized frails who trot around their kitchen in uncountable steps daily, cooking and washing-up until their arches droop. The good old squat and wait until the sago-crab sizzles in the juicy palm has a lot in its favour—and flavour.

These primitive people don't believe in skimping and scraping and killing their bodies by overwork. If it wasn't for the Government socking them ten bob a year tax and preventing them from eating missionaries their existence would be blissful indeed.

At dusk I returned to the *Panawina* for a prosaic dinner of tinned tomato-soup, but the coastal fever reversed Newton's law of gravity once again.

Night fell, and Teddy turned on the wireless. From Melbourne came a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and the Bridal Chorus swelled to exquisite march rhythm when the beauteous Elsa met the knightly Lohengrin and plighted their nuptials. Then the march theme gave place to a tender love song.

Just at that moment a boom of tom-toms resounded from the long-house across the silent waters of the anchorage, as a dusky Lohengrin married a dusky Elsa—or so I presumed, as the throbbing of the tom-toms mingled with the throbbing of Wagner and coastal fever inside my cranium.

"Big dance on to-night," said Teddy. "What say we go ashore?"

Off we rowed in the blackness to listen to a Papuan opera. The thick-thatched walls of the long-house obscured all lights, and it was eerie as we slipped through the mud-disturbing pigs, crabs, and dogs—scavengers of the night.

Then we climbed the slippery slope and stood on the platform of the dubu peering at the scene within. Tiny hearth fires in scores were glowing from end to end of the tunnel, and in the centre, near the altar of skulls (named the "agibe"), a devil dance had started.

Welcome guests, we joined the throng of near-nude spectators, and watched an exciting tom-tom ballet. The *compère* of the show was the guernseyed Village Councillor, squatting near the shrine, chewing green betel slaked with lime from a gourd.

In front of him cavorted a band of twenty-five male choristers splendidly plumed with hornbill feathers sticking skyward, with necklets of pigs' tusks and pearl-shell, armbands of fibre and feathers, and loin belts of plaited fibre, embellished with a tufted tail of shredded fibre which wagged as they wiggled.

Each of the dancers had a tubular wooden drum (*gaba*)

twenty inches in length, narrowed at the waist for gripping, and widening to a funnel three inches in diameter at each end.

Across one end of the gaba a piece of python skin was tightly stretched and gummed. With the fingers of the right hand the dancers tapped out a tattoo which was magnified in the wooden cone to a thumping resonance.

As they thumped they stamped with their feet, advancing in line backwards and forwards in a Pigville quadrille, singing in a high-pitched key a tune-chant to the throbbing pulse-beat of the chorused refrain.

Wagner sounded tame after this—the real thing.

Suddenly the song and dance stopped, and the dancers warmed their drums over a fire to stretch the serpent-skin tight, then it started again, hornbill plumes and fibre tails wagging in a cassowary cake-walk.

It was a savage scene with plenty of humour as the performers stopped thumping their drums to thump their rumps and legs and mash mosquitoes.

Every time the line of dancers advanced, a mob of stray kids and dogs followed the line forward, but when the dancers turkey-trotted backwards and tramped on the dogs and kids, there was many a squeal and yelp to vary the Pigville prance.

As the rhythm of the cannibal cantata mounted to a frenzy the dancers eyed Teddy and me hungrily. I wondered if they would decide to Fry Anything Once. . . . But it was all a shadow show, as the Pigvillains have long since learned that they can't chew a white man without suffering metal indigestion.

The dubu house was packed to the doors for the performance; there was standing-room only in the gallery. I squatted on a long seat in the dress circle among the taubau smokers, who passed their bamboo pipe from mouth to mouth.

This Papuan pipe is a piece of bamboo about twenty inches in length, and two inches in diameter, with one end sealed by the natural division of the bamboo joint.

A cigarette made of black tobacco wrapped in sago leaf is inserted in a small hole near the lower closed end, and a coal applied. The smoker then puts the open end of the tube to his mouth and sucks hard till the pipe is filled with smoke. Then he takes out the cigarette, plugs up the small orifice with his finger and sucks up the smoke, swallowing and holding it until he nearly bursts. Then he slowly exhales with a grunt, and passes the pipe and the cigarette to his neighbour, who relights

the cigarette for his puff. This method saves tobacco, and gives a cool smoke.

The ladies of the village are enthusiasts of the taubau pipe of peace, and would be the envy of their white sisters, who chain-smoke miserable three-inch fags.

What a contrast between this Papuan peep-show and the Wagner opera I've just heard on the wireless.

Here I am among the nobbs of Goaribari, while down south in Melbourne the stuffed-shirt socialites are still listening to *Lohengrin*. Most don't know the difference between a common chord and a counterpoint; they only patronize opera to have the snobby snoozepapers report that Mrs Bluebottle wore a frock of puce sequins, or that Mrs Dillpickle had her hair in a jade-green snood.

From the dubu-house to the *Panawina* was only a hop, slip and a slop in a cannibal's canoe. I lay in my cubbyhole bunk listening to the throbbing of the distant tom-toms, as the party kept on, and on, and on.

Midnight and I can't sleep as I ponder over Wagner and voodoo, civilization and savagery, snobs and head-hunters, electric cookers and mud stoves. Who is the better off—the Papuan in his dubu or the Pott's Pointer in his poky flat?

As I feverishly toss and turn in my black hole of Calcutta, the tropical heat puddles me in perspiration, and half deliriously I puzzle about the perplexities of Papuans and the complexities of culture.

Can't solve it, so I carry my bunk up on deck and decide to become a beachcomber, wandering bearded, boozy and homeless among black belles, neath coco palms, or coral strands—beyond reach of income-tax collectors.

Then on second thoughts I decide that civilization *sans* malaria, mosquitoes, and tinned tucker has a lot in its favour, particularly with iced drinks, fresh food, and slinking sheilahs with rayon-silk undies, instead of the nipa-palm vees of the betel-chewing, taubau-smoking man-eaters.

At last comes sleep, the tom-toms cease and there is silence over Goaribari.

Dawn was not so silent. I woke on the deck drenched by tropical dew and soaked in fever sweat, to hear a chorus of dogs barking,

children playing, and the chattering of canoeists from the dubu as fresh as mudlarks after their corroboree.

I wasn't feeling so fresh, and got Maniara to douse a few buckets of gulf water over my burning skull.

Six o'clock, sunrise, and Skipper Teddy yelled:

"Start the engine, Debotana! Pull up the pick, Maniara!"

Chug, chug, and off we go across the wide mouth of the Omati River, leaving the log canoes rolling in our wake. Our course is set for the mazy delta of the Kikori River, which debouches at the head of the Gulf of Papua, in a potamographic profusion of channels, creeks, swamps, islets, and griddles, to the confusion of cartographers.

The *Panawina* passed the mouth of the Omati River, and entered the Newberry River, the farthest west of the Kikori's exits.

The banks were thickly wooded with mangrove, sago, and nipa palm. Crocodiles infest the delta. But I didn't see any, as we hugged the outside banks (where the river took a bend) to dodge sand-spits deposited by the current on the inner corner. Keeping to the channel we zigzagged from side to side, passing many a dubu, with the smoke of breakfast fires coming through the chinks.

Two hours later we came to the confluence of five streams, silvery avenues receding like star beams, timbered with dense and dank vegetation of vivid green.

There was not a breath of wind. The sun blazed whitely at eight o'clock, gilding the surface of the water with perfect reflections of the mangroves and palms in the patch of shade on the eastern banks.

The *Panawina* chugged on, disturbing the calm of the palms. On the bow Maniara perched, eagle-eyed and alert for sand-banks and drifting logs.

Four amphibian delta-dwellers sculled noiselessly across the stream questing for sago pith. "Give us this day our daily sago" is their prayer to the gods of the swamps. A fish-hawk hawks fishlessly—and it's meal time aboard the *Panawina*.

In our cabin-bed-chart-room, Skipper Teddy and I sit down to breakfast; I watch him eat a solid feed, while he watches me sip a tumblerful of powdered milk. I'm trying to starve my stomach into submission.

Teddy Mears is a remarkable man. For thirty-five years he has knocked about the coasts of North Queensland, Papua and

New Guinea; and knows nearly every creek, inlet, and river of the gulf. Short, wiry, nimble and alert, he is a living advertisement for the salubrity of the Papuan climate.

Government handyman in maritime matters, he has skippered and engineered all kinds of craft: luggers, schooners, launches, pinnaces and whaleboats, up-river and down-creek, breasting many a bar, cruising from island to island and beach to beach in fair weather and foul, monsoon and guba, high tide and low.

A son of the tropics, he joined the Papuan Government Service in 1913 as a patrol officer of armed constabulary, with an extra salary for driving a launch—and he's been driving a launch ever since.

Teddy needs no map in the Papuan river mazes. But he confessed to me that one day in Sydney "he got lost in a city block". He is a man of the vast open spaces of the sea, and his jaunty personality is known in every village and dubu along the thousand miles of littoral from the Louisiade Archipelago to the Dutch border.

The natives know Teddy and Teddy knows the natives. He greets old constables, boat boys, and released murderers by name, wherever he calls on his periodical patrols. He speaks a dozen lingoos, and is the great news carrier of the territory.

From Port Moresby he sallies forth laden with mails and stores; and so the chug of the *Panawina* is eagerly awaited in many a lonely outpost.

He's a Papuan personality and knows everything that has happened in the territory for nigh on thirty years. He knows all the scandal both white and black and can make the dusky belles and beaux blush by his knowledge of their domestic imbroglios.

Wesleyan, who brought breakfast to table, is the dandy of the *Panawina's* crew. He crimps his peroxidized hair and goes ashore at every village to make a hit with the girls. He stayed all night in Dopima dubu and came aboard, bleary-eyed, at piccaninny daylight. They say a sailor has a wife in every port—and Wesleyan is no wowser.

Teddy tells me not to worry about the coastal fever, and consoles me by saying it's only Papua's welcome to a greenhorn. "Once you're over this you'll be all right," he says.

I hope so.

My torso is as red as a pillar-box. Yesterday I basked shirtless



KAIMARE VILLAGE. RAVI—OR MEN'S HOUSE



KAIMARE VILLAGE. THE AUTHOR MEETS THE CHIEF

on deck 'neath the awning reading Chalmers on Cannibalism, as we threaded the mud-banks of the Bamu.

The sun glinted from the water, and my bared skin shone with the reflected glory. Nudity is all right for darkies, but being a beachcomber in the fierce rays of the tropic sun is no picnic for newcomers from temperate zones.

On deck again after milko, I watched the unfolding diorama as we chug-chugged up the main stream of the Kikori. The vegetation improved as we went farther inland, and tall thin-stemmed mottled trees took the place of the estuarine mangroves, as we passed from tidal water to fresh. Dozens of delightful little creeks emerging from the bush looked like happy lurks for crocodiles—and mosquitoes.

Nipa-palm seeds, the size and shape of a cricket ball, floated down the current in quest of a rooting-place.

The vivid red flowers of the D'Albertis creeper hung at intervals in festoons, their tendrils trailing in the current. They are nearly as scarlet as my sunburnt back, which is sore and blistery.

We passed a village, very modern with a bamboo wharf. Red-leaved crotons flourish in front of the Magistrate's house, which the natives are required by law to build and keep in order for visiting whites.

The river forks, and we fork up the left arm, which is the main channel of the Kikori. Now in the distance to the north low hills can be seen, their contours merging with gloomy clouds.

We pass the London Missionary Society's Station of Babaguena on a knoll sixty feet above river-level. Now the river narrows, and we see many sago scalpers at work along the banks. The natives have no gardens on the banks; but they cultivate patches of drier ground away from the river. We nearly run on to a sand-spit. Maniara in the bow swings the lead, shouting, "Mark one!" Teddy yells: "Stop engines! Full speed astern!"

We flounder into the channel. Maniara grunts "Mark six!" and Teddy bawls "Full steam ahead!"

At ten o'clock, four hours after leaving Goaribari, we moor at the wharf of Kikori town, the capital of the Delta Division, seat of the Resident Magistrate and his entourage of officials—the only white man's town at the head of the Papuan Gulf.



## CHAPTER XIII

THE Delta Division of Papua comprises the valleys of the Turama, the Omati, the Kikori, and the Purari rivers (the two last-named being the biggest) all flowing from the Central Range which towers to 13,000 feet, and dropping to one big muddy-mouthed delta. The native population of the lower river reaches has been counted at 17,000. In the grassy plateaux of the upper rivers dwell tens of thousands of Stone Age people, only recently discovered.

The white population of Kikori town is nine persons, the overlords of the rainy delta, which has a downpour of 280 inches a year. It is one of the world's wettest spots.

The chief industries of Kikori are recruiting labourers for service elsewhere, oil prospecting, and missionizing. There are also 260 acres under coco-nuts, and 750 under rubber.

The first white explorer into the delta of the Kikori was Captain Blackwood of H.M.S. *Fly*. In 1845, he made two trips upstream as far as fresh water in the *Fly's* gig, penetrating fifteen miles into the country. Says Naturalist Jukes, who was with him: "As we were now so far from the sea, with such a labyrinth of channels to trace back, we determined to return, so we took to our oars and went rapidly down the river with a current in our favour."

That was on 12 May 1845.

For nearly forty years the river mazes at the head of the Papuan Gulf remained unvisited. Then the London Missionary Society missionaries, under energetic Tamate Chalmers, went probing for souls along the shore, and vaguely mapped the indentations of the hydra-mouthed Kikori and Purari.

At that time the Kikori was known as the Aird, following Captain Blackwood's nomenclature. Chalmers discovered the eastern estuaries of the Purari delta, which are named the Alele, the Aivei and the Panaroa mouths. From the natives he learned that these are the exits of one and the same large river. He

ascended to the junction of the Alele and Aivei mouths, and, exercising the privileges of an explorer, decreed: "I call the main stream inland Wickham after a very dear friend."

This cursory examination left the real problem of the delta's anastomosis unsolved, as the missionaries were not mapmakers.

The first cartographic campaign to solve this riparian riddle was undertaken by Theodore F. Bevan, who first went to New Guinea in November 1884 and was treated at Port Moresby by Deputy Commissioner Romilly as a prohibited immigrant. Undeterred, Bevan returned to Sydney, interviewed Sir Peter Scratchley, and was informed that no obstacles would be placed in the way of trading. Adventurous Bevan shuttled back to Port Moresby and bluffed Romilly into letting him go for a cruise eastward to the Louisiades.

Returning to Sydney in July 1885, he wrote scorching letters to the press, pointing out that missionary influence and obstruction were indirectly responsible for the murder of some island traders, and urging the Government to give protection to legitimate business. He also interviewed Sir Peter Scratchley again in Sydney and obtained formal permission "to explore and trade in British New Guinea".

Back went Bevan to Port Moresby with his tiny 5-ton cutter, the *Electra*, but he got an electric reception from missionaries Chalmers and Lawes. "Chalmers immediately took me to task in the most brusque manner possible for my writings," says Bevan, "more especially as the cap seemed to fit. He hurled at me every abusive epithet he could lay his tongue to."

Influenced by the missionaries, Scratchley was "cold and stiff in his personal bearing" and wrote letters to Bevan addressed "Mr" instead of "Esq". Despite lack of gubernatorial geniality and excess of evangelical ebullience, Mr Bevan continued his trading, as he was armed with counsel's opinion that Romilly had no legal right to restrain him from trade. So, persistent Mr Bevan established a chain of trepang stations, and "in a short time I had a thousand or more natives along nearly a hundred miles of coast fishing for me".

But the missionary influence poisoned the minds of the simple fisher folk, and influenced them against helping European traders. Chalmers also sent Bevan "an offensive letter".

On New Year's Day, 1886, the cutter *Electra* was plundered at Kapa Kapa, while Bevan and his crew were ashore. Then fever smote the trader, and he returned to Sydney in July with his

“liver and spleen three times their normal size”. Again his pen exposed the massacres of traders and the malign influence of the missionaries, who “publicly advocated keeping New Guinea for the New Guineans, which of course included themselves”.

Recovered from fever, Bevan, in November 1886, had a yarn in Sydney with Bob Philp, of Burns Philp and Company and was offered the free use of a steam launch, *Victory*, for exploration of the *terra incognita* at the head of the Papuan Gulf—in the mysterious region of the Pigville River which had not been explored since Blackwood boated up it, fifteen miles, in 1845.

The 90-ton *Victory* left Thursday Island on 17 March 1887 and entered the Pigville River two days later. Bevan was now in the Kikori delta, but did not know the native name. Says he: “After almost hopeless search through seemingly interminable labyrinths, and marshy mazes, it was left to me to discover that Blackwood’s entrance is but one of many means of ingress to a fine and well-defined freshwater river, having its rise more than a hundred miles northerly in the mountains, and into which hidden recesses it was traced by my expedition.”

For thirty-four days the men of the *Victory* continued their riparian researches, and mapped the delta. They followed up the stream now known as the Kikori for a hundred miles, naming it the Douglas after the new Administrator, and its two tributaries the Burns and the Philp, after the patrons of the expedition.

Bevan then returned to the sea through an outlet of the delta which he named Port Bevan—after his uncle. Entering Port Romilly, he explored the Kapaina River, which he named the Stanhope. Then he returned to Port Romilly, deviated through the delta eastward, and so reached the Purari, which he named the “Queen’s Jubilee River”.

Still probing the mazes, the pioneer penetrator followed this stream up to the point now known as Bevan Rapids, which he reached on 23 April 1887, and gently boasted that his Queen’s Jubilee River at this point—far inland—is “a greater river than is the Thames at London Bridge”.

This was the same river, the Purari, which Chalmers had named the Wickham when he explored its lower reaches on 15 October 1883. No wonder cartographers cogitate, trying to affix cognomens to deltaic ramifications explored by amateurs.

Bevan the bold waxed lyrical, and said that he felt like Columbus when, “after threading the ramifying arteries, and

rounding the end of matted jungles, and island swamps innumerable of the multitudinous deltas", he discovered a pair of mile-wide parent rivers, and traced them far inland.

A victory for the *Victory*.

Alas! it's the old, old story of government officials, jealous of private enterprise, refusing to confirm nomenclature bestowed by freelances. Governments let these pioneers do the hard work, accept their charts, but not their nomenclature. "Native names must be preserved," is the ukase of the armchair bureaucrats as an excuse for not accepting the place-names of the pioneers. But usually these stay-at-home sycophants liberally bestow the names of kings, queens, dukes, barons—and politicians—in lieu of native names.

In this case the ire of the officials against Bevan's exposure of missionary machinations caused them to discard the Burns Philp nomenclature and the Queen's Jubilee in favour of the Kikori and the Purari. They also discarded Chalmers's dear friend, Wickham.

Back in Sydney Explorer Bevan was fêted by the Royal Geographical Society, and, while he was in the boom, obtained from Sir Henry Parkes the loan of the New South Wales Government steam-launch *Mabel*, for a further probing of the Papuan deltaic maze. He was also loaned a surveyor, Mr Hemmy, by the Queensland Government, and given "a munificent helping hand by Lord Brassey".

The *Mabel* left Thursday Island on 1 November 1887. Her purpose was to verify and extend the maps made in the previous March and April. With Surveyor Hemmy shooting the sun, the brave little *Mabel* plugged up the Kikori till she stranded at the head of navigation in exactly seven degrees south latitude.

On a mountain near by was bestowed the appropriate name of Lord Brassey, the patron of the expedition. Apparently this is the mountain, 8000 feet high, on which the zealous officials of Port Moresby have since confirmed the "native" name "Mount Murray", bestowed by Donald Mackay.

Then the *Mabel* floated again down-delta, and went up the Queen's Jubilee River, alias the Wickham, alias the Purari, but couldn't get as far as the *Victory* on the previous voyage, because *Mabel* lacked power. She continued her peregrinations around the deltaic maze, discovering a new cross-country creek which

they named the Centenary River, in honour of the hundredth birthday of New South Wales.

So Bevan put the delta on the map. But he was never given the full credit for his great discoveries, as missionary Lawes claimed that coast-hugger Chalmers had already explored that region. And so secret strings were pulled to wipe Bevan's work from the records.

Enter an official.

When Lieutenant-Governor Sir William MacGregor got busy in Papua, he decided to wipe Bevan, Chalmers and all his pre-charted into oblivion: "Since Captain Blackwood went up the Aird River," remarked MacGregor, in a dispatch dated 19 May 1892, "this part of the Gulf has been avoided by travellers."

Apparently the Governor knew nothing and cared less about "unofficial explorations". On 11 March 1892 he prowled along the gulf northward from the Fly River, and explored the estuaries of the Bamu River. Then he penetrated the Gama River for thirty-five miles, with the launch and whaleboat, till he came to a village where: "I was only a target for their arrows."

MacGregor and his men had to shoot their way out of the ambush. Says he: "I certainly saw one man shot down, and that event had probably much to do with their retreat."

Down the Gama sailed William the Conqueror, and up the next river, the Turama, sailed William the Explorer for eighty miles, where "the river was only about sixty yards broad and only two to three fathoms deep". Alas! there was a wild bore which rumbled and roared up the river daily. "We treated it with great respect, but the bore will always prove a great drawback to the use of this river," says William. And so it has. It rumbles and roars around the Gulf of Papua like the crest of a comber, varying from six feet to thirty feet in height according to season and the scour of the tides in this vast oceanic cul-de-sac.

Downstream again the exploring Governor nosed the *Merrie England* to Cape Blackwood, and proceeded with launch and whaleboat up the Aird River to Aird Hill, where he slept for a night, so that he could have a good view of the mangroves below in the morning. By aneroid measurement he calculated Aird Hill as 850 feet high. MacGregor with Surveyor Cameron and eight armed constables then went up the Kikori, meeting canoeists who "paddled erect and at great speed".

More canoes came, and 300 bowmen surrounded the whaleboat menacingly. Then arrows whizzed and MacGregor and his

musketeers opened fire: "In about a minute, twenty or thirty shots were fired. The occupants of the canoes were stupefied. A great many of them landed and sought shelter in the forest, and there was no further thought of molesting us."

After this fight MacGregor returned down-delta for his steam-launch. On 26 March he steamed again up the Kikori as far as the Tumu limestone hills, where, says he: "the neighbourhood is very picturesque, and a Government Station could be favourably situated here."

In the following year MacGregor came back for another probe of the riparian maze. Leaving Port Moresby on the *Merrie England* on 27 December 1893, he transhipped his party at Orokolo village into the steam-launch *Ruby* and two whaleboats, and boldly pushed up the Purari.

On 1 January he reached the Bevan Rapids, and passed Bevan's farthest point, to arrive at "the Aure Junction, at about four score miles from the sea", on the following day. Then he tried to ascend the Aure, which came in strongly from the northern mountains "from 80 to 100 yards wide", but soon reached a waterfall full of boulders "and could make no further progress".

So William the Wise returned to Aure Junction and followed the stream which flowed in from the west. For a week he whale-boated, but "with hard work made barely a score of miles", as his party plugged through the sandstone gorges and powerful eddies of the Purari's western branch.

Nine days later they were still toiling against the torrent, at the rate of two miles a day. Then William reached a village on 23 January, where: "to the utter astonishment of all of us, a savage yell burst from the throats of probably a hundred men in the bush. Their wild howl, accompanied by the deep sonorous tap of the war-drum was very impressive."

It was so impressive that William's warriors retreated to their boats, after leaving a present of a plane iron, a cowrie shell and a bit of red cloth. This worked the oracle, and next day the "howlers" broke an arrow as a sign of peace, while MacGregor hoisted a red flag with a similar motive.

The great Papuan Swap now followed. The howlers gave the Governor some sugar-cane, and told him the name of their village was Biroe. Whimsical Willy reciprocated with a tomahawk, and told the savages his name was MacGregor.

So there was peace on the Purari.

It was useless for the explorer to proceed farther up the rushing torrent, as he could see the main range "presenting great toothed nearly perpendicular peaks". While returning to the coast, the scouting Scot found in the river sands of Upper Purari "a small black glistening speck. When cleaned it looked like coal, and in a few minutes a dish full was collected."

When MacGregor's report was published, nothing was done about probing the Upper Purari in quest of the coal deposits. until, in the year 1908, Donald Mackay, a thirty-eight-year-old grazier of Wallendbeen, New South Wales, decided to go hunting for coal among the cannibals.

His plan was to follow the Upper Purari to its source, cut across-country westward to the Strickland River, then to raft down the Strickland and Fly to the coast. From Biroe to the Strickland did not look far on the map—only about two hundred miles. But they were unexplored miles, probably vertical. Donald was undeterred.

On 31 July 1908 the Mackay party was landed from the *Merrie England* at Yule Island. There were four white men: Donald Mackay, leader, W. S. Little, second in command, A. E. Pratt, surveyor, and J. Eichorn, naturalist—with eighty-four native carriers.

A full account of this expedition is given in my biography of Donald Mackay, *The Last of the Explorers*, so I'll give only an outline here.

The party was joined at Yule Island by Magistrate L. L. Bell, with a contingent of armed native police and carriers. This sweating army walked around the beaches from Yule Island to the government boatshed on the Alele mouth of the Purari River. Here they rendezvoused with a schooner which brought supplies.

On 14 August the party started upstream with two whaleboats and a dozen canoes. Fifteen days later after back-breaking rowing upstream, the explorers reached the junction of the Aure, and followed MacGregor's boatsteps up the western Purari branch.

On 3 September they reached Biroe, and pacified the population with calico, salt, knives, beads and tobacco. Magistrate Bell then returned down-river with the two whaleboats and the police, leaving the Mackay party on the edge of the unknown.

Westward ho! on 20 September went Donald Mackay, cutting his way through the jungle beside the raging torrent, and came

to a gorge where the river roared with a noise like thunder between cliffs 1000 feet high. They named this ravine Hathor Gorge, after the river-temple in Upper Egypt dedicated to the worship of the cow-headed goddess of Love and Joy, situated on a sandstone ravine of the Nile.

After this tribute to the Egyptian ancestor of Aphrodite, Mackay's party painfully penetrated to the grass plateaux beyond. On 13 October, three weeks after leaving Biroe, they had made only twenty-five miles westering. Rain poured incessantly; several of the party had malaria—including the leader; others were pincushioned by the arrows of hostile villagers.

Obstinate Donald Mackay, undeterred by difficulties, hacked and fought his way over razor-edged ridges, following the torrential stream, until, on Friday 13 November, "an extensive coalfield, presumably of great commercial value" was discovered, between Mount Musgrave and a peak which Mackay named Mount Favenc—after his friend Ernest Favenc, author and explorer, who had suggested the expedition.

This has since been re-named "Mount Duau".

They continued through dreadful limestone country with needle-peaked ridges and pouring rain, until 24 November. Two months after leaving Biroe they had travelled only fifty geographical miles westward. Now they were 2000 feet above sea-level. On 27 November they discovered another large coalfield, with an exposed seam, nine feet in thickness. Here Mackay named some sugar-loafed pinnacles the Crummer Peaks, in honour of the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, Sydney.

On 1 December, still following the mountain torrent to its source, he named a range 5000 feet high the Amy Range, after his wife.

Now they were in a valley of Stone Age men, who had never seen or heard of pale-faces and their bang-bang guns. Dodging showers of arrows, the travellers fought their way up the defiles and ridges from village to village, through a maze of limestone precipices and pot-holes, until on 13 December they camped 3000 feet above sea-level, near the headwaters of the western Purari.

Further progress was almost impossible; they were near journey's end. But obstinate Donald Mackay made a further reconnaissance with Little, Pratt, and twelve strong boys, and reached a spur of a peak, 8000 feet high, which he named Mount Murray, after the Administrator of Papua.



Gazing to the westward through binoculars, Donald at last had to admit defeat: "After all this beastliness, worry, and expense," he wrote, "there is nothing left to do except to turn back, and the satisfaction of traversing the country from here to the Fly River is still left to someone else!"

From the Mount Murray spur the explorers could see nothing but an endless maze of mountains and jungle, pitted with pot-holes, uninhabited and lacking sago plantations or gardens to provide food for the carriers. After dreadful ordeals they had reached only eighty miles west of Biroe in three months. Though they had discovered two coalfields, the surrounding limestone terrain of the uplands was valueless for settlement. The leader gave the order to return.

On 18 December, fever-stricken and frustrated, the explorers trudged back towards Hathor Gorge, where they arrived on New Year's Day 1909. Here canoes and rafts were made and launched and, on 20 January, the party reached the coast at Alele mouth, whence they had departed five months previously.

"It seemed like five years," Donald told me later.

Thanks to the skill and courage of the leader of this classic coal search, only one of his party was killed—arrowed by a savage near Hathor Gorge.

Grazier Mackay paid all the expenses of this lengthy tour of discovery, and bestowed the names of others on Purari peaks, modestly refrained from adding his own. It was not until 1941 on representations from the present writer, that the Government of Papua gazetted the name "Donald Mackay Coal-field" in the basin of the Upper Purari.

His Honour Judge Murray, who had been Acting-Administrator of Papua since 9 April 1907, was promoted to the exalted status of Lieutenant-Governor on 18 January 1909. He also continued to hold his old job as Chief Judge.

In February 1910 Judge Murray decided to do a Papuan probe, and cruised into the river Kikori, in search of a site for a government station. With him was his nephew Leonard Murray, Magistrate H. J. Ryan, and Patrol Officer C. G. Garrioch.

The party reached Tumu—a mass of green-clothed limestone hills—and then split forces to search downstream for an elevated position. Judge Murray and Magistrate Ryan explored the eastern bank, while Leonard Murray and Garrioch prowled along the western bank.

Five miles below the Tumu Hills, Leonard Murray and Garrioch found the site on which the present Kikori Station has been established.

The date was 14 February 1910.

On 3 March 1909 the Hon. Miles Staniforth Cater Smith—known as Staniforth Smith for short—was given a dormant commission as “Administrator of the Territory, to take rank in the public service next to the Lieutenant-Governor, to act during his absence or incapacity, and to continue to hold the offices of Commissioner for Lands, Director of Agriculture, etc.”

Staniforth Smith, the dormant Administrator, became active in July 1910, when His Honour Judge Murray left Papua for a year’s well-earned leave of absence. It wasn’t long before his substitute got the itch for a cruise round the coast in the *Merrie England*. He visited the eastern islands in August and September, and then girded up his loins for a great adventure, as he decided to walk overland from the Kikori delta, in a westerly direction, and make an attempt to reach the headwaters of the Strickland River.

On 20 November 1910 an imposing Kikori Expedition started from Goaribari with a steam-launch and three whaleboats. The party comprised Staniforth Smith, Administrator, L. L. Bell, Inspector of Native Affairs, A. E. Pratt, surveyor, Leonard Murray, private secretary, and J. P. Hennelly, Resident Magistrate of the Gulf Division. With them were twenty-five native constables and fifty carriers.

They proceeded up the Kikori for four days, beyond a point which had been reached by Judge Murray in the previous year. The little army then left their boats and took to their boots—except the barefooted police and carriers—and marched north-easterly into *terra incognita*. Climbing a limestone range, 4000 feet high, they came to the south-east spur of Mount Murray, which Donald Mackay had climbed and named on the north-east spur two years previously.

For three days Staniforth Smith and party clambered up Mount Murray midst ferns, fogs, and mosses, listening to the bower-birds and chattering with cold. The height of Mount Murray was estimated as 8000 feet. Slithering downhill again, the Administrator found that food-supplies were running short after fourteen days’ footslogging, so he decided that Magistrate Hennelly and Secretary Leonard Murray should return to the

coast, with fourteen police and thirty-three carriers. So Leonard Murray returned from his uncle's mountain, while Smith, Pratt, Bell, with eleven police and seventeen carriers, proceeded on their journey into the unknown.

Before saying farewell, Smith told Leonard Murray that his intention was to proceed from Mount Murray in a westerly direction "ultimately descending to the coast by one of the rivers west of the Kikori, namely the Turama, or Bamu, or even the Strickland and Fly, if sago and other native food was procurable".

With this laudable ambition, Smith, Bell, Pratt and party trekked across the plateau for two days until they came to a district in "a large fertile valley at an elevation of 6000 feet, watered by the Samberigi Creek, and containing a population of at least 1000 people".

Smith sojourned among the Samberigis, who at first were hostile, but later became friendly and "evinced the greatest joy" when they were presented with red cloth. Thus the Stone Age men of the Papuan plateau were first discovered and introduced to the mysteries—and madness—of white civilization. The Acting-Administrator was astonished to find a huge population in the valley. As he marched from village to village he estimated at least 15,000 inhabitants on the tableland, some "unusually light skinned", some "dark-skinned dolicho-cephalic men rather morose and unemotional". Others again were hook-nosed of the "so-called Semitic type".

Smithy lamented that he didn't have time to measure "the cephalic indices of the natives as they were very shy". Also, their cephalic indices were smothered with fuzzy-tops "clotted into tags and rolls" with oil or honey and wax.

On 10 December the Administrator's party bowled from the Samberigi Creek, passing through a valley flanked by sentinel mountains—now known as Mount Pratt and Mount Bell—and, on Christmas Day, camped on the Mobi River and made sago. Following upstream, with many a halt while they chopped down sago-trees and squelched their pith into starch, the explorers toiled across a limestone tableland cluttered with sharp boulders. On 18 January 1911 they reached the summit of a range which they thought was the Divide between the Kikori and Fly basins.

"We thought our exploration was practically finished," rejoices Smith, "as we saw the waters of a large river to the south-west, and that next day we would reach the Strickland, make rafts, and float down to the mouth of the Fly River."

Alas for the Administrator's ambition, and his potamographic postulations! The river was in sight but not within reach, as it flowed at the foot of a fearful precipice as sheer as the walls of a house.

The weary carriers, who were used to the soft mud of the seashore, limped along the limestone crags, feet bleeding, teeth chattering with cold, limbs rheumatic with the icy fog of the mountains. Below them the river roared, but on the barren plateau there was not enough water to cook sago and rice for the disheartened inlanders. On 25 January Smith ordered his thirsty men to descend the steep cliffs. They slithered with liana-vines down the vertiginous drops, and at last reached the foaming torrent "which ran in a fierce rapid through converging mountains, forming a gorge 1200 feet deep".

The party's thirst was quenched, but they didn't know where they were.

Believing he was on the Strickland, Staniforth Smith decided to build four rafts and shoot the rapids, in the hope of reaching smooth water. The rafts were built and on 26 January the flotilla embarked with the Administrator on the first raft. Says he: "Before I had gone two hundred yards, my raft was upset in the swirling torrent. The rapids became worse and worse with large waves and whirlpools. We were unable either to stop or guide the raft."

Clinging to the upturned float, Smith and the natives were ducked in the deluge for five miles, then dashed ashore on a ledge. All their food, clothing and baggage were lost. Foodless and fireless, the raft-wrecked mariners staggered along the river-bank for five days looking for their mates. At last they saw Bell and Pratt—on the opposite bank—and building a rough raft got across quite exhausted.

Here they learned that Bell and Pratt had also been dunked in the whirlpools of the gorge, while seven of the native carriers were drowned in the raging torrent. The white men now realized that they were not on the Strickland, as the general trend of the gorge was south-easterly. They deduced that they were on the headwaters of the Bamu and decided to walk down-river along the banks till the rapids ceased, and they could once again chance it on rafts.

Wearily the survivors started to plod down the gorge, glimpsing the sky as a rift far overhead between sheer cliffs, and wondering

whether this River of Death would plunge deeper and deeper underground to Hell's gateway.

Day after day in fateful February the lost men struggled along, subsisting on snatches of sago, while the gorge got deeper, and the rapids more turbulent.

Meanwhile, in faraway Port Moresby, the public servants were getting worried at the absence of their boss. No news had been heard of the Administrator since 20 November, so His Honour, the Acting-Acting-Administrator, Judge C. E. Herbert, got anxious and decided to organize search parties. It was a big job, as nobody knew where the Administrator was, or by what river he might be attempting to reach the coast. With commendable promptitude, Judge Herbert decided to send three relief parties—one up the Kikori, another up the Fly and Strickland, and the third up the Bamu and the Turama.

The headquarters of the search were at Goaribari Island, where the *Merrie England* arrived on 17 February 1911.

Next day, the Kikori Search Party started upstream. It was commanded by W. N. Beaver, Resident Magistrate of the Western Division. His second in command was H. J. Ryan, Assistant Resident Magistrate. With them were H. C. Cardew, patrol officer, Mr Remington, steward of the *Merrie England*, twenty-seven police and seventy-four carriers. This huge personnel, with 175 bags of rice and camping impedimenta, was loaded on the steam-launch *Wanetta* with four whaleboats in tow.

Two days later they reached Smith's No. 1 Camp on the banks of the Kikori, and prepared to follow his trail inland. While building a depot, Beaver heard from some of his own carriers a rumour that the Administrator and all his party had been killed by the up-river tribes and eaten. He considered this report worth retailing to his superior officer, so he sent the *Wanetta* full speed to Goaribari to tell the sanguinary tale to Judge Herbert. Four days later the Judge arrived at the Kikori camp, made investigations, and decided that the rumour was a surphy. With Judge Herbert came Patrol Officer L. Brown. He was left in charge of the Kikori depot camp, while searchers Beaver, Ryan and Remington proceeded inland on the tracks of the missing Administrator. Judge Herbert returned downstream.

Beaver's big party now trailed the lost men, easily following their foot-slips to Mount Murray, which was reached on 7 March,

Then they set their faces to the westward to follow the trail towards the Samberigi valley.

We leave Beaver battling through the bush, and go with Judge Herbert and Government Secretary Leonard Murray aboard the *Wanetta* at Goaribari. On 26 February they cruised to the Bamu mouth, and chugged upstream to the head of navigation which they reached on 28 February—but found no trace of the missing Excellency.

So they returned to Goaribari, and on 3 March started in the *Wanetta* with nine police and fifteen carriers to explore the Turama. After two days they passed Sir William MacGregor's farthest point, and next day reached the farthest point of Leonard Murray and Hennelly's exploration of the previous December.

This was near the limit of navigation. So on 7 March the Judge and the secretary with five police and fourteen carriers, left the boats in charge of an armed party and started a search to the northwards in the jungle for signs or rumours of Staniforth Smith's line of march.

We leave them searching. . . .

Meanwhile yet another search party had started for the Strickland River, prepared to greet and succour the Administrator's party in case they reached their original destination.

The Strickland search was in charge of G. H. Massey-Baker, Assistant Resident Magistrate of the Western Division. He travelled on the steam ketch, *Sir Arthur*, and left Kiwai Island at the mouth of the Fly on 10 February. With him was Captain Powell, skipper of the *Sir Arthur*, six native constables and six native crew, with provisions for nine weeks.

Six days and one hour later they reached a point fifteen miles up the Strickland, pitching camp on 17 February, and keeping a watchful eye upstream.

But nary a sign of the missing Administrator. Says Baker: "the enforced idleness was beginning to tell on the boys' health, so I made them cut a good track about 200 yards for exercise to keep them employed."

On 27 February he shifted camp farther up-river and shot a fine cassowary. Then he gave himself exercise by observing latitude, longitude, the variation of the compass, and millions of mosquitoes.

But still no Administrator hove in sight.

While all these parties—Beaver in the Samberigi valley, Herbert and Murray up the Turama, and Massey-Baker up the Strickland—were anxiously combing the riparian outlets and inlets, what was His Excellency Miles Staniforth Cater Smith doing?

We left him in mid-February with Bell, Pratt and the surviving carriers plodding down the banks of a turbulent river in the deep limestone defiles of a seemingly endless gorge. For twenty-nine days the exhausted party trudged over the boulders, with nothing to eat except some soup powder and cocoa, eked out with bush sago. They had no matches and had to carry a fire-stick with them, like Stone Age men. At night they slept in caves or fissures of the rock, scarcely protected from the pouring rain. Day after day they painfully progressed along the river gorges for a hundred miles, crawling at the rate of about four miles a day. But still the river roared over the rocks making rafting impossible. At last, on 2 March, the party emerged from the fearsome gorge of Hell's Cauldron—and lo, the river ran smoothly before them!

Almost at death's door from their dreadful ordeal, they made two rough rafts of hollow logs, and floated blissfully downstream for fifty miles. It was the height of luxury. Then alas! after one day, the river entered another gorge, the rafts were upset, and the party clinging to the logs were dashed and buffeted for ten miles before they could get to land. That night the rain poured, and the party had neither food nor fire.

A cold dawn broke on 3 March 1911, as wearily the riparian roamers resumed their rafting, praying for the ocean—wherever it might be.

Everything was lost: food, documents, instruments, gear, tents and some lives. But hope still remained. If the river didn't get them, starvation would, unless a miracle occurred.

More rapids, not so rough this time, were rafted without mishap. Then, suddenly, one of the police constables shouted:

"Taubada! Taubada! Tents!"

Drifting around a bend in the river, His Excellency saw an unmistakable encampment of Europeans—tent-flies neatly rigged, camp-fires with billies boiling, natives in police uniform on guard with rifles, and a whaleboat moored to the river-bank.

Where were they?

Was this the Strickland, the Turama, or the Bamu?

The raftees drifted down the sluggish current, and soon the whaleboat put out from the shore to meet them. In it was a white



KAIMARE VILLAGE. NATIVES BEAT DRUMS





KAIMARE VILLAGE. HEADMEN POSE WITH "KWOIS"  
FROM THE RAVI OR SACRED HOUSE

man, scrutinizing them incredulously. It was Patrol Officer Lewis Brown in charge of the base camp of the Beaver Relief Party.

The wanderers had returned to the very spot on the Kikori River from whence they had departed on their overland odyssey fifteen weeks previously! His Excellency, with Bell, Pratt, and all the native police were saved, but eleven of the seventeen carriers had lost their lives in the devil's cauldron of the Upper Kikori gorge.

So the rescued Administrator and his party got back to civilization at Goaribari.

The date was 5 March 1911.

What about the rescue parties?

On 3 March, when Smith and Company arrived at the Kikori Camp, Beaver's Search Party had almost reached Mount Murray, thirty miles to the north of the river. Knowing nothing of what was happening behind them, they followed the trail of the Administrator westward to Samberigi valley—where the attitude of the inhabitants, and their numbers, made him think of a hornets' nest: "The morning consisted of a continual series of ambushes, assaults and thefts. Savages leapt out of thick scrub, armed with spears and stone axes, and others rolled stones down the mountain side."

On 9 March it was necessary to use rifle-fire to repel an assault, and several Samberigi savages fell wounded.

Still on the trail of Staniforth Smith, Beaver decided to travel light. He sent back Mr Remington with six police and thirty carriers, while he, Ryan and Cardew continued their expedition, with forty-two carriers and fourteen police. Picking up the tracks of the Administrator, they forced their way through arrow, lance and stone fusillades in the Samberigi valley, and trailed the missing party amidst the plateaux and precipices farther west.

Up there on the limestone, the sole signs of the lost men were the scratches made by their hobnail boots. On 22 March Beaver's boys found Smith's Camp No. 29, on the banks of a stream. They learned from local natives that this was the River Mobi, and that the Administrator had crossed it and paddled down to the coast by another stream farther to the south.

To verify this tale Beaver cast around on the opposite side of the stream, found the trail again, and followed His Excellency for another three days through prickly pandanus until they reached "a long and very rough gorge in which was a river full

of rapids and falls". Staggering desperately over the Administrator's route, they came to more tribesmen who pointed downstream.

On 26 March Beaver reached Smith's Camp No. 35. He now had only twenty-four mats of rice left, with sixty hungry mouths to feed: "It was with great reluctance that I came to the conclusion that our limit was reached." Actually, he was within one day's march of the point where Staniforth Smith had built his first rafts in the devil's cauldron of the Upper Kikori gorge.

As it was useless to go on Beaver turned back. Says he: "Our carriers commenced to break up rapidly, several of them dropping by the way."

On 29 March he was back on the Mobi River, and decided to raft on its placid bosom. Sixteen canoes were purchased from local yokels and the party started a water journey.

But not for long. "Soon we entered the mountains, and got among a succession of gorges and rapids." Three canoes were smashed, but no lives lost. On April Fools' Day they started canoeing again, but came to another rapid, in which two more canoes were smashed. Then Beaver sent a scouting party, which discovered an immense waterfall roaring through a gorge full of rapids.

This spot is marked on the map as Beaver's Falls. The rescuers were themselves now in need of rescue.

Says Beaver: "No way could be discovered out of the difficulty. The only course was to return to the Mobi Camp and go back as we had come." It was a good jest for April Fools' Day, as Beaver's Falls are only about five miles from the junction of the Mobi and Kikori rivers. If he had continued on foot around the falls, he would have come to smooth water, and reached the base camp at Kikori in a day. Instead, he painfully retraced his tracks up the limestone gorge. On 2 April: "perched high in a niche in the limestone, I came upon a regular Golgotha. Literally hundreds of skulls were stacked neatly in rows—apparently a native burial ground."

Leaving this cranial repository, the weary search party cut across country to Mount Murray, one of the carriers dying on the way. There, on 13 April, they were met by a relief party, under Remington, who had come to search for the searchers.

Three days later they were back at the Kikori base camp, where a second carrier died from his ordeals. On 18 April the

Beaver party were safe back at Goaribari, six weeks after the missing Administrator had arrived there. . . .

The Second Search Party, under Judge Herbert and Secretary Leonard Murray, floundered in the jungles of the Upper Turama from 7 to 11 March, interrogating natives, but found no trace of His Excellency the Administrator—until they returned to Goaribari on 12 March, and heard that His Nibs had been salvaged and taken to Daru. . . .

The Third Search Party, under Massey-Baker, far up the Strickland, provided the mosquitoes with succulent diet from 15 March to 8 April, till rations ran short and they returned downstream to the mouth of the Fly. Here they were surprised—and peeved—to be told that His Excellency had arrived home safe and sound forty days previously.

So ended the most disastrous and expensive expedition in the history of Papuan exploration.

When Judge J. H. P. Murray returned from his year's leave of absence, he indulged in blistering sarcasm at the expense of his deputy, Staniforth Smith:

The party did not succeed in getting beyond the Kikori, and eventually found themselves, after suffering great hardships and losing one-third of their number, at the very point from which they had started. The expedition cannot be looked upon as otherwise than disastrous; but the disaster was relieved by a display of courage and endurance on the part of the white men and native police.

This judicial summing-up was unfair to Staniforth Smith, who performed a splendid feat of inland pioneering and traversed "524 miles of totally unexplored country—374 miles on foot and 150 by river".

He returned to his starting-point only after completing a wide circle through the interior plateaux. He was the first to climb to the summit of Mount Murray; the first to discover the populous Samberigi valley; and the first to trace the Kikori River to its headwaters. He carried out his original intention.

The unfortunate loss of life in the raging torrent was a disaster which could not have been foreseen. In fact, deaths by drowning on a far greater scale have occurred in ferry-boat disasters on Sydney Harbour. It is impossible to avoid the inference that Judge Murray, in decrying this expedition, departed from judicial impartiality.

♦

While all the excitement of the search for Smith was simmering, the Hon. W. S. Little, who had been Donald Mackay's companion on the Upper Purari expedition of 1908, did a little bit of exploring on his own hook.

On 22 March 1911 he plugged up the Kikori in a whaleboat, followed its eastern tributary, the Sirebi River, to the head of navigation, then planted his whaleboat in a thicket. With him was Mr Evans, a coal expert from Newcastle, New South Wales, Mr Stanton, and twenty carriers. The party walked overland from the Upper Sirebi in a north-easterly direction to the Mackay Coal-field on the Upper Purari. Attacked by natives who smashed the skull of a carrier with a stone club, Little and party had to fire, and two savages bit the mud. Reaching their destination after this mishap, Little and the coal expert verified Donald Mackay's discovery of a coal-seam twelve feet thick, and safely returned to the Sirebi on 11 May after a walkabout of forty-eight days.

So the map of the Kikori and Purari deltas was limned in the blood, tears, and sweat of the pioneer pathfinders—white men and black.

The Stone Age men of the tablelands of the Upper Purari and Upper Kikori dwelled undisturbed in their primitive routine of births, marriages, deaths, and fights, while the Government concentrated on controlling the cannibals and coco-nut growers of the coast.

Then came the Great War of 1914-18, and German New Guinea became League of Nations New Guinea under Australian Mandate, so that the whole eastern end of Bird o' Paradise Land was now an Australian responsibility.

On both sides of the Great Dividing Range, venturesome Aussies probed the unexplored interior. From the government station established at Kikori village, Judge Murray's well-trained officers started systematic map-making of the Delta Division, bringing more and more inland villages under their benevolent supervision.

In 1922 Patrol Officers Flint and Saunders pushed up the Kikori and explored the valley of the Samberigi (discovered by Staniforth Smith) which rises forinist Mount Murray and flows westward to join the Kikori. They found scattered villagers bearded and busbyed, who cultivate tobacco and make sago bis-

cuits. The patrol returned to the coast by way of the Sirebi River.

In the following three years, Patrol Officers Woodward, Saunders and Rentoul consolidated the Samberigi district and brought the bearded plateau dwellers fully under control.

In 1929 Patrol Officers Faithorn and C. Champion extended the area still farther, and followed the east-flowing Erewa River to its junction with the Upper Purari near Donald Mackay's "Hathor Gorge". Much of the journey was by raft and canoe, with danger and difficulty of whirlpools and rapids. New native tribes were discovered in the limestone hills of the Great Central Range, near the border of the Mandated Territory.

Paternal Governor Murray laconically reported that this hazardous patrol "was a fine piece of work and reflected credit on all concerned".

So Staniforth Smith's Paradise Lost became a Paradise Bossed.

Meanwhile, on the northern side of the Great Range, gold was discovered in the Bulolo valley in 1923, and soon the aeroplanes of commerce were soaring inland to the Bulolo Bonanza. Three-and-a-half tons of gold were taken out of the Edie Creek Eldorado, and giant dredges squatted on the river, masticating the low-grade alluvial sands.

In March 1930 fifty miners of Bulolo chipped in five pounds apiece to equip a prospecting party for a search of the Midas Metal in the unmapped highlands of the centre far to the west of Bulolo. The leaders of this party were two Micks—Leahy and Dwyer—typical Aussies lured to the Land of the Guineagans by the golden glitter.

With sixteen native carriers, the Micks left Salamaua seaport, on the Huon Gulf, on 12 April 1930. They trudged up the Markham River valley over the Divide to the Ramu River, then struck inland going south to the unmapped interior highlands. Gradually they climbed, till they were on a plateau 9000 feet above sea-level, and there amid the grasslands, they found hundreds of villages, peopled with Stone Age men, who had never seen the sea or a white man, and knew nothing of the miracle of iron.

Consternation spread across the grasslands as the Mad Micks marched deeper into the plateau, finding that the supposedly uninhabited interior contained tens of thousands of primitives—all industriously tilling their gardens with pointed sticks, and warring against their neighbours with pointed arrows.

They followed a stream, panning for gold, till their tucker was almost exhausted. Then they decided to follow that stream until it reached the ocean. Their reasoning led them to believe that they were on a tributary of the north-flowing Sepik or Ramu rivers. They reckoned it would be easier to keep on going downhill with the water than to retrace their steps.

Day after day, Leahy and Dwyer followed the stream until it widened into a river, foaming and gushing through gorges—and running ever southward. Anxiously they looked for the expected westward turn, which would bring them back to the sea—but the perverse river tore ever southward, cutting its gorges deeper and deeper in ravines of the Central Range.

Three weeks after entering the plateau country, the mapless Micks found their river plunging into a gorge 3000 feet deep—still southing through a rocky and uninhabited terrain.

Said Mick: "If we keep on going downstream, we're certain to reach the sea, somewhere, some day."

Mick agreed.

With bloody feet they battled on by the side of the turbulent rapids, living on goura pigeons and sago, while leeches lived on them. The stream widened as tributaries joined it, and they came to a junction where a rushing torrent poured from the westward. Utterly bushed, they did not realize that they were now in Papua, at the Aure junction of the Purari River.

Contrary to all geographic probability they had discovered that the Purari River rises on the northern side of the Great Dividing Range and flows clean through it—the miracle of the mountain. They had proved that the Aure River, considered by MacGregor and Mackay to be only a tributary, was the main stream of the Purari itself; while the western branch, which the two Macs had followed, was only a tributary of the stream which the two Micks had discovered.

So a minor tributary became a major stream.

After emerging from the mountains the Micks drifted down the Purari on bartered canoes and on 10 July 1930 arrived at Port Romilly. Eighty-nine days from coast to coast, prospectors Mick Leahy and Mick Dwyer found no gold, but they made one of the most important geographical discoveries in the whole history of New Guinea exploration.

They had uncovered "The Land That Time Forgot".

This venture by private enterprise put the Papuan Government

patrollers on their mettle, and adventurous officers respectfully importuned Lieutenant-Governor Murray to sanction official patrols to the Central Plateau from the Papuan side.

A chance came for a police visit to the Upper Purari when in 1931 rumours came downstream that the cannibals of the mountains were on the war-path. The villagers of Turoha had sharpened up their arrows and made death raids on the peaceful citizens of Uri, massacring dozens of innocents.

Police were ordered up-river to investigate, and arrest the murderers. Led by Patrol Officer Jack Hides, a party of armed native constables left Kikori in November 1931, in a motor-launch with two canoes. Hides chased the murderers up and down the Era, Vailala, and Purari rivers, and, after an exciting skirmish in the bush, captured the cannibal chief and his murdering men, and brought them back to the coast to expiate their crimes in penal servitude. This expedition through the uncontrolled inland added considerably to the detailed geographic knowledge of the region traversed by Donald Mackay twenty-three years previously.

But the wild men of the Turoha tribe only got wilder when their chief was arrested. More reports came down-river of Turoha murder raids. On 21 November 1932 a second police patrol left Kikori, to quell the insurgents. This expedition was in charge of Patrol Officer Cecil F. Cowley, who travelled upstream in the launch *Alele*, with seven armed native constables.

Cowley was the man for the job. A North Queenslander, he was schooled in Port Moresby and at Parramatta, with honours in all sorts of sports. A world-wanderer and try-anything-oncer, he joined the Papuan Patrol Service and was thirty years of age at this time.

Cowley's patrol travelled across the delta from Kikori, and went up the Purari River to Bevan Rapids, which was reached on 25 November. The launch then returned downstream, and the patrol proceeded up-river by canoe. Entering the western branch on the track of MacGregor and Mackay, Cowley's patrol left their canoes below Hathor Gorge and slogged through the bush on the trail of the terrible Turohas. Hot on the heels of the fugitives, Cowley climbed to the summit of the Dividing Range, between the Purari and Era rivers, and surprised the Turohas as they were feasting in a double-decker dubu-house on 18 December.

A quick scuffle, and thirteen cannibals were handcuffed, trussed,



and rafted down the Era River to justice, reaching Kikori on Christmas Eve. Twelve of these prisoners were subsequently tried before Judge Murray and sentenced to a year's hard labour—a light penalty for murder. But the White Man's law is kind to savages who have not yet fully learned that killing their enemies is a crime.

Patrol Officer Cowley, like Hides in the previous year, had added much detailed information to the map of the Upper Purari region—but still the patrol officers longed for an opportunity to make expeditions into the huge blank on the map on the north-western corner of Papua—between the Strickland River and Donald Mackay's farthest point.

Murray hearkened and ordered a special patrol to explore "all that unknown country lying between the Strickland River, and the watershed of the Purari". In this area of approximately 7000 square miles no white man had previously set foot. A route was planned which would carry the expedition into the mountain vastnesses of the Central Range.

The leader appointed for the Strickland-Purari patrol was Assistant Resident Magistrate Jack G. Hides, with Patrol Officer L. James O'Malley as second in command. With them they had a native sergeant and nine armed constables, also twenty-eight coastal carriers.

On 1 January 1935 the party left Daru Island in the launch *Vailala*, and proceeded up-Fly. Ten days later they reached the limit of navigation on the Upper Strickland River, beyond Everitt's farthest point of 1885. From there the *Vailala* returned downstream, and the explorers struggled upstream in canoes and rafts, relaying eight tons of food and equipment, forty-three miles farther up Strickland, and then forty-one miles beyond that up a side-river flowing in from the east, which they named the Rentoul, after a pioneer patrol officer. There a base camp was made, and the land party of thirty-eight natives and two white men "commenced our slow advance into the north-east, crossing a great sandstone plateau, 3000 feet above sea-level".

Hides was at home in Papua. Son of Horace Herbert Hides, a road overseer, he was born at Port Moresby in 1906, and thus realized his life's ambition before he was thirty. His mate, Jim O'Malley, described by Hides as "a young Irish-Australian, big and generous minded", had proved his worth in previous murder

patrols with Hides in the Kunimaipa country near Mount Yule.

It was 18 February when the canoe-journey ended in the gorges of the Rentoul River, and three days later the party started cutting a track across forests, where birds of paradise danced and crow-squawked. Day after day, from camp to camp, Hides and O'Malley hewed their passage uphill for a month, occasionally meeting natives—who were not hostile.

On 23 March fifty savages appeared on a grass ridge, surging and prancing. They were armed with bows and arrows, and, says Hides, "they hooted and croaked at us". A tall, thin and very black sorcerer harangued the crowd urging them to attack, with demonological frenzy.

Next day the trespassers ran into an ambush, shots were fired, and Hides brought his gun into play, as an arrow whizzed near his head. The attacker fell: "There was a clean bullet wound through his chest. I will always regret the shooting of this native—a rifle against a bow and arrow; it did not seem fair to me."

The leader consoled himself by adding: "yet the position might have been reversed. It could easily have been me lying on the ground with an arrow in my chest."

On and on the pathfinders plodded, until 2 April, when they scaled a sandstone valley, climbed to 4000 feet and emerged from the forest. Far to the east they could see an extensive plateau of limestone country. It was 6 April when they started to climb this limestone divide: "The rock is honeycombed and stood on end. It forms fissures and craters, large and small, and every step has to be watched, for the limestone edges are as sharp as a broken bottle."

Tough luck on the bare-soled carriers from the coast.

Next day it was worse: "Terrible country, the fissures and cylindrical pits appear bottomless to the eye. It is a desolate silent land, inhabited by plump black-furred bandicoots." Three days later they passed two large caves, haunted by pythons and bats, and their outlook was "far from cheerful" as the rain poured down and the tent-flies leaked. Still they were climbing. On 11 April they were 5275 feet up, and still going weak!

Four days later the altitude was 6300 feet, and the police and carriers gorged on several hundred large grey bats caught in a cavern. Now the party was at the summit of the Divide, and next morning started to descend, northwards. "We were in sane country again, where streams flowed properly, and where one

could walk on solid earth. The fog was behind us and a valley was below"—obscured by cloud.

Hides and O'Malley had conquered the limestone labyrinth, the Divide between the Fly River system and the Kikori-Purari system. This is the same type of Papuan upland which baffled Donald Mackay farther to the east in 1908, and hindered the Karius-Champion party farther to the west in 1927. In this land of daily deluge, the water of aeons has scoured all topsoil from the rocks, and then bored deep funnel-like crevices and pot-holes into the stone itself. It is Nightmare Land, where a foot-slip might mean death to the faller—dashed on needle-sharp pinnacles and jutting razor-edged crags. To make matters worse, a heavy fog blankets the peaks and impedes the vision of explorers painfully feeling their way by compass route amidst the pointed perils.

To the east Hides saw a lofty peak, which he named "Mount Leonard Murray" in honour of the Lieutenant-Governor's secretary.

While limping over the limestone on 11 April Hides found a deep gorge through which flowed a large river towards the south-east. Was this the headwaters of the Kikori? Says he: "As I watched the raging waters swirl by, I thought of its journey's end far away in the Kikori delta." So he named the new river the "Ryan" after H. J. Ryan, the Resident Magistrate who established the Kikori government station on 3 February 1912.

"This great Papuan Officer," says Hides, "with a remarkable gift for understanding natives laughed his way through life, to leave his bones on the battlefields of France." So the Ryan River roars on, cleaving its way through the limestone—and Hides roared on also, as his carriers barked their shins on the jagged crags.

All bad things come to an end including limestone. On 16 April "the mists and cloud cleared for a few minutes and I saw the valleys to the northward". But seeing is not the same as being there, especially in Papua, land of hills and valleys, and it was not until four days later, still at an altitude of 6200 feet, that they halted at the edge of the plateau and "stood spellbound by a scene of wild and lonely splendour. Beyond the gorge, gold and green and reaching as far as the eye could see, lay rolling timbered slopes and grassland with their cultivated squares. Here was a population such as I have sometimes dreamed of finding."

Romantic Hides had discovered his "Papuan Wonderland"—a fertile mountain valley, densely peopled and cultivated by Stone Age men. Clambering down the canyon the intruders found the Stone Age people addicted to pretty yodelling. They were "light skinned, with girlish mops of brown fuzzy hair adorned with flowers", and were "graciously friendly". They wore bone daggers in their girdles.

Lucky they were friendly, as there were thousands of them. But it was a Land of Plenty, and the visitors were invited to gorge on taro and bananas, while their proffered gifts of tomahawks and mirrors were politely refused.

Proceeding through this yodelling wonderland of park-like farms with hedges of croton, pine, and hibiscus, they saw the people cultivating their chocolate-brown soil with wooden spades: "We offered them steel, but as usual they smilingly refused."

Each cultivation had a "neat squarely built house that was thatched with grass". These Stone Agers of the mountains are of a completely different race from the dubu dwellers of the coast. Instead of living communally in long-houses or villages they are individualists—each family living on its own farm. The friendly people surrounded the visitors in hundreds, pointing to O'Malley's red beard, and then to the sky, to indicate their belief that he must be an angel. O'Malley knew different—but he couldn't tell.

A few days later it was different, when a yodelling mob of valleyites armed with bows and arrows "commenced to surround us in a business-like manner". Hides gave the order to the police to fire over their heads, and the yodelling ceased as the bowmen vamoosed. Going farther up the Ryan valley—which the natives called the Tari Furoro—discoverer Hides philosophized on the future of this happy race, and discreetly expressed the hope that missionaries would not ruin them. "They have a religion of their own," he noted. "Is it not possible that civilization for these people does not begin with just spiritual enlightenment? We will have to give them a lot if they are not to be disillusioned."

In some ways, the Tari Furoros were highly civilized, as the bald-headed dandies of the valley wore wigs of human hair adorned with flowers—a vanity of cranium coiffures even among the lost tribes of the mountains!

But Hides and O'Malley could not dally in the valley as their rice-supply was very low, and they were still a long, long way from home. So they set their faces northward, and started to climb once again through the terrible limestone that walled the fertile glens of the Tari Furoro. The yodelling primitives seemingly decided to give the heavenly intruders a warm send-off. On 28 April scores of bowmen set an ambush, and a shower of arrows hailed from the boulders.

Three shots were fired and two Stone Age men fell dead. It was their initiation to metal.

Regretful Hides led his limpers up the limestone from glen to glen, from tableland to tableland, seeking the headwaters of the Purari, beyond yet another Divide. They were making for a pass near a high pyramid which "we named Mount Champion".

Higher and higher they climbed, following a track which led through cultivated areas in the range. The astonished natives were friendly, but the altitude made the temperature fall. On 2 June, at 8000 feet, the coastal boys of Orokelo could scarcely endure the bitter cold as they staggered up the track towards the gap, 10,500 feet high, near Mount Champion through a terrain where "daisies, buttercups, and Christmas bells flowered in the short grasses".

Hides estimated the height of Mount Champion at 13,000 feet. The party entered the narrow gap—about a mile in length—and glancing backwards, saw their last glimpse of Mount Leonard Murray, which had been their landmark for many a day. They emerged on the northern watershed in grass and tree-fern country, while the teeth of the carriers chattered with cold, and their lips were blue, as the icy wind and freezing droplets of the fog stiffened their marrows. Paradise frost!

That night one of the coastal carriers named Hakea died of cold, and was buried 9800 feet above the level of his native village of Orokelo. Sadly farewelling Hakea, the weary and hungry survivors slithered through lichen and moss forest till, on 5 May, they stood on a spur: "and found a glorious view unfolded. A large valley could be seen draining south-east, with scores of miles of grassland, shining streams and cultivations. We had passed through the Back Door of the Purari."

More yodelling as the travellers—weak and semi-starved—staggered into the new Promised Land and found yet another immense population of Stone Age men, bearded and spor-

raned, dwelling in the Waga Furari—in the headwaters of the Purari River.

"Only a few pounds of rice remained, but we would get to the coast somehow," vowed Hides. The mountaineers were friendly but mean, and instead of offering food they proffered women.

But the explorers were in a hurry and hastened downhill to 8000 feet, where they found park-like areas planted with casuarinas. These are dancing grounds "where the men gather to play their 'Pan Pipes' and take their parts in cannibalistic feasts".

Descending towards the winding stream far below, the weary men of the patrol could see smoke rising from "scores upon scores of farms" in the plateau 3000 feet above the level of the river. That night 200 Pan Pipers, armed with stone battle-axes, surrounded the patrol, but on seeing the police alert with their rifles decided not to engage in battle. Hooting and yodelling followed the travellers downhill till they came to a bridge of rickety rattan across the torrent. This they crossed amid the jeers, hoots and yodels of the dusky spectators, to encounter on the other side hostile and stingy savages, wearing pom-poms of cassowary feathers in their heads.

The hooters refused to barter food to the starved explorers, who spent a hungry night in the Land of Plenty, their second night without a feed. Next morning the party got a hooting send-off; and, during the day, "a terrific din of yodelling rose on all sides of us, and shots rang out. It lasted only fifteen seconds, and after the attackers had fled we found nine men dead."

This battle of the Waga Furari was the turning-point in the expedition's fortunes, as it put an end to all hooting and yodelling. Soon the valleyites came with lavish gifts of pig, sugar-cane and potatoes. "I could not help liking them," says Hides, "even though they had tried to murder us."

But the friendliness did not last long. Two days later, in the district of another tribe, the travellers were attacked by "crowds of men armed with bows and battle-axes". Hides fired quickly into the midst of them, then shot a savage who was wrestling on the ground with Constable Budua, while two others were preparing to give him the coup de battle-axe. In less than a minute the fight was over, and four savages lay dead.

Then a new lot came to attack, armed with shields and stabbing spears. "I had no alternative but to fire," said Hides.

A quarter of a mile farther on, they were attacked for the third time that day. Once again the police fired, and "I saw two men fall".

That night the party camped in a din of yodelling, and an armed guard was posted. The Kill Calls rose to a crescendo, and the explorers "stopped about six rushes with rifle-fire". At the end of a terrible day Hides and O'Malley took turn about on watch, with armed police setting lighted hurricane lamps in the approaches of the camp. During the night one of the Orokolo carriers, named Aunai, died of sickness, hunger, cold and a broken heart. He was buried before dawn in the land of the cannibals, his grave "cunningly concealed with ashes and leaves".

Breaking camp, the emaciated explorers wearily walked down the valley while their leader suffered agonies of dysentery. All day they staggered through hostile hordes, who jeered and refused to barter. After dark there was another attack, repulsed by rifle-fire, while howling and yodelling resounded for miles in a din that deafened. On 15 May, still trying to find a way out of this densely populated Papuan Yodel Land, there was another battle in which four yodellers were killed.

So Hides and his men fought their way out of the inhospitable Waga Furari valley, the leader getting weaker, and relying more and more on his young companion. "For O'Malley's fearless support and loyalty," said Hides, "I have not sufficient praise."

They came to another valley, where the people were still treacherous and inhuman, but the highlanders were being left behind, and on 21 May the explorers were in timbered country, where the stream flowed smoothly through an immense cleft in the limestone.

In view of the weakened state of his party, Hides took a Napoleonic decision to build rafts for the passage of the gorge. Five were built, and the explorers drifted for six miles till they came to a cataract where "the gorge narrowed, and poured the whole of the Elave River to thunder down between gigantic rocks and ledges".

That was the end of the rafting, and the starving, weakened patrol clambered out of the gorge to the grassland, where once again they met with a hostile reception and had to fire to disperse their attackers.

"My sight is affected," notes Hides on 28 May, "and words cannot describe my weariness,"

More shooting, and three days later "we could see a large river before us which a friendly native, to our great joy, told us was the Erewa". Now they knew where they were, as they were approaching the country of the Samberigi tribes, who had been brought under control from Kikori Station a few years previously.

In his weakened state Hides was unwilling to raft down the Erewa through Hathor Gorge to the Purari, and he therefore decided to trek overland, via Mount Murray, through the Samberigi country to the Kikori River. After a fortnight of agony, steering south, they reached the river on 18 June. Canoeing downstream, they arrived at Kikori Government Station a few hours later.

Says Hides: "To hear voices of our own kind again; to be free from want and treachery; and to rest under the shelter of a strong roof, are things that brought us thoughts inexpressible."

So ended the Strickland-Purari Patrol, one of the most dramatic official expeditions in the history of Papua. In four months' weary and dangerous overlanding, a huge area of country was traversed, inhabited by tens of thousands of black subjects who never knew that they were ruled by Canberra.

Unnumbered hordes of Stone Age men were introduced to white man's magic—the preliminary to law and order. The cost of the patrol was £290 11s. 4d. for food and equipment.

Apart from the two Orokelo carriers who died on the journey over the dreadful limestone uplands, an armed constable, named Emesi, also died from the effects of his ordeals the day after reaching sanctuary at Kikori. Armed Constable Emesi had been a carrier on the Karius-Champion walkabout from the Fly to the Sepik in 1927, and now "had come through all the trials of this patrol, only to find his grave at the end of the journey. It was a sad ending for all of us," says Jack Hides. He concludes his book, *Papuan Wonderland*, with an eloquent tribute to the native police and carriers, who are indispensable to the success of Papuan overlanding.

Hides resigned from the government service after this classic expedition and came to Sydney for a holiday. But soon the lure of Papua re-asserted itself and in 1937 he went up the Strickland River, prospecting for gold. His companion was David Lyall, aged twenty-six.



Six hundred miles up-river, the party was stricken with beri-beri, and Hides brought his sick mate back to Daru, where Lyall died.

Says Hides: "We buried him out beyond the Mission, where the frangipanni and the oleanders bloom."

Then Hides, himself weak and ill, returned to Sydney and died on 19 June 1938, aged thirty-two years.

In Canberra the Prime Minister, Hon. J. A. Lyons, said: "This young explorer was a man Australia can ill afford to lose. Not only Australia, but the world, already knows of the great work he has done in discovering new areas in the wild hinterland of Papua."

## CHAPTER XIV

As the *Panawina* moored at the wharf of Kikori town my head was still throbbing with fever, and it throbbed still more with excitement when Skipper Teddy Mears said:

"There's Ivan Champion on the wharf to meet you!"

I expected to find the cross-country conqueror a hefty he-man with hair on his chest; instead I was greeted by a scholarly-looking, modest bloke, wearing spectacles like myself, and with the quiet voice and manner of a schoolmaster. The cultured ensemble was completed by a Clark Gable half-mo.

We climbed a steep hill fringed with coco-nut palms to the government station, set in gardens on a headland overlooking the wide Kikori stream. Mrs Champion, *petite* and Papuan-born like her husband, greeted me with home-made brown bread and lettuce fresh from the garden.

Ivan Francis Champion was Assistant Resident Magistrate of the Delta Division. His cross-country companion, Charles Karius, the Resident Magistrate, lived in a house a coco-nut's throw away. At the time of my visit, Karius was in hospital at Port Moresby, and Ivan Champion was the White Lord of the Kikori.

Ivan and his two brothers, Claude and Frank, are the sons of the Hon. H. W. Champion, who became Acting-Administrator after Sir Hubert Murray's death. Mr Champion, Senior, is one of the oldest of Papuan officers: he was appointed in March 1902 and has served the country faithfully ever since. All three sons have distinguished themselves as Papuan patrol officers and explorers. Frank—stationed at Daru—was up the Fly River on patrol when I visited there, and Claude—stationed with Ivan at Kikori—was also away on patrol when I visited the Delta. . . .

With the conqueror of the Bismarck Range, I walked to the Kikori Court House and watched him magisterially handing out justice.

There was only one case for hearing that morning, and it was a case of bananas—I mean a bunch of bananas. Complainant was a midget wearing a calico skirt. He had five holes in each ear, receptacles for blackfellows' baubles; the lobes of his ears

were like colanders. Accused, who wore a Jacky Howe singlet and a red skirt, was ornate with armbands and earrings. A giant with a scowl, he was charged with pinching a bunch of bananas from the midget.

Evidence given in Kikori lingo was translated into Motu by an impassive ebony constable. Magistrate Ivan listened patiently to the dual depositions. The midget complained that he was prevented by law from putting an arrow through the aggressor. The scowling villain denied that he had taken the midget's bananas; swore that he didn't like bananas, and that he had never been near the scene of the alleged crime on the date alleged.

Impartial Ivan nodded wisely as he cross-examined complainant for proof of the larceny. Midget moaned his bananaful tale, explaining that he had seen accused asleep under a tree surrounded by banana-skins, of an identical colour, shape, size and smell to those on the missing bunch.

This was only circumstantial evidence, not corroborated. So Ivan dismissed the case, after cautioning both litigants not to do it again.

That's what it seemed like to me, as I don't understand Motu.

After a delightful lunch, we visited the gaol where criminals from hundreds of miles around were expiating crimes varying from cannibalism to cuckoldry.

The calaboose is just a big stockade with thatched huts. Hard labour is cutting grass, which grows faster than it is cut, as the rainfall at Kikori is over 230 inches a year. The prisoners seemed healthy and wore contented looks—little else. They get very homesick for their native villages, and gradually it dawns on them that they are transgressors of the White Man's law when they arrow their enemies.

After a sojourn in the calaboose, some of the most intelligent become reformed characters and go to Port Moresby to enlist in the native constabulary. With this university education they go back to their villages, as the representatives of the law and order which they originally transgressed.

Who says crime does not pay? These reformed criminals are the most zealous constables among the wild tribes of the interior grasslands.

My visit gave the prisoners and their gaolers a break, as Magistrate Champion gave permission for a Kikori party in my honour.

"Put on your glad rags!" was the order, and soon the prisoners were arrayed in everything bar the kitchen stove. They stamped and pranced in a Kikori corroboree on the parade ground, several hundred of them, applauded by stream-lined daughters and beam-lined mammas, in weird and wonderful garb, making weird and wonderful noises. It reminded me of a sable Scotsmen's hogmanay on New Year's Eve, as the drums thumped and the Kikori kilts and sporrans swirled in a highland fling, while the savages yelled "Hoch aye" as they pranced over the cut grass in their Kikori cavort.

Barbaric and abandoned, they gave all they had to the dance, with bacchantic bounds, screaming as if possessed. There were no prizes for posture, grace, and gesture, as at the Highland gatherings on Sydney Show Ground, where the tartaned Scots pivot and pirouette across a pair of swords, one hand on hip and one overhead.

These Kikori highlanders had dancing rules of their own as they flung themselves in a Papuan Fling, improvising as they jigged in deltaic divertissements, with many an *entrechat* and *pas de bourrée*. These primitive Nijinskis danced with their legs, their arms, their heads, their eyes—and their hearts—and even the orchestra danced as they thumped their snakeskin drums.

The ceremonial kilt is a sporran of tapa cloth, made from beaten bark, and a rump sporran of vivid red and green croton leaves. Some wore ramis or skirts of grass. Still more ornate and varied were the head-dresses, mostly consisting of feathers stuck in fuzzy tops, with towering coronas and haloes of bird-of-paradise plumes, the orange red of the *Raggiana*, and black, white, yellow and grey feathers from cassowary, cockatoo, horn-bill and goura pigeon.

There was infinite variety of headgear and tailgear, as the dancing felons had come from many parts of the immense Delta Division: from the Samberigi valley and Lake Kutubu, from the grasslands of the Waga Furari, and the mudlands of Goaribari. The men of these different districts, isolated from time immemorial by tribal customs, were all brought together by the White Man's defiance of taboo lines dividing district from district. Each man vied in outshouting and outprancing his competitors for the glory of his tribe and the honour of his village.

It was an anthropological mêlée, as the gaudied prisoners jigged and yelled round orchestras of gaba drums larger than

those I had seen at Goaribari. There were no highbrow critics to complain that their bel canto was staccato, so they opened their larynges and let go *ad lib*.

As the drums throbbed, and the half-tamed hell-benders shrieked their war-cries in pantomime, I realized that it is only in the last twenty years that the district of the Delta has been brought fully under control. Lost in the ecstasy of the dance, these people reverted to the state of savagery in which their tribes had dwelled for thousands of years before white men came to their country.

Rain fell and drowned the dancers—and the onlookers—and we retreated for a sip of sipora on Ivan Champion's veranda.

Towards nightfall a motor-launch anchored at the wharf, and I went aboard for a trip to the home of Mr Percy Hinds, a trader, who was to be my host for the night.

Lengthy and tropic-browed, Trader Hinds greeted me with a grin when I arrived at his modern home, half a mile downstream. Mrs Hinds was away in Sydney, and the merry grass-widower was planning a surprise against her return—paint, paint everywhere, and nowhere to sit down. Outside was a tennis-court shaded by casuarina-trees. It was paved with ninety-two canoe-loads of lime.

Two temporary bachelors sat down to a dinner of duck—deliciously cooked and served with fresh vegetables by a squad of fuzzy-top house-boys.

Percy Hinds was born at Raymond Terrace, New South Wales, in 1884. In 1913 he was offered a job as manager of a store on Woodlark Island, eastern Papua, and accepted the appointment in the hope of saving up enough money to go into partnership with his friend, Victor Trumper, in a Sydney Sports Store.

When he had saved up enough, in June 1915, Percy wired to Victor, and got a reply from Sep Trumper, telling that Victor the cricketer had died in St Vincent's Hospital two days previously.

This tragedy put an end to Percy Hinds's plans for a metropolitan career. He stayed in the tropics as a trader and recruiter. He could write a dozen books on the unofficial history of Papua, and he's as full of yarns as a cuscus is of fleas. In the early days Percy met Mrs Mahony—the "Queen of Sud-Est"—a white woman who had a trading-station buying copra and bêche-de-mer

from the natives of the Louisiades. This amazing woman was reputed to be fabulously rich. She dwelled unprotected among thousands of natives who revered her and called her "Mother". When there was a gold-rush to the islands, the Sud-Est Queen became a Florence Nightingale, as her pub-store was converted into a hospital when an epidemic of dysentery broke out. Mother Mahony nursed the diggers—and buried those who died.

Percy the trader left Woodlark Island and opened a store and recruiting depot at Daru. Judge Murray officially approved of this ace recruiter and wrote: "He is regarded as dependable, and has a reputation for fair dealing with the natives, who like him. I am able to say from my own knowledge that he is a man of kindly and generous impulses."

In 1916 Percy became an oil millionaire—nearly. He was Labour Superintendent on the experimental drill at Upoia, on the Vailala River, when suddenly, at 185 feet, a gush of oil blew out the crown block. Harry Crooks, a Californian driller, reckoned it was another Oklahoma. The oil from the gusher was immediately used to drive the motor-launch to Port Moresby. Samples were sent to Canberra. . . . Alas, it was only seepage oil and the gusher gushed no more.

Trader Hinds sold his business in Daru and bought Whitten's store at Port Moresby. This proved a bit too civilized; there was more credit than cash. So he gave the city slickers a miss and started business at Kikori in 1938. In two years he has built a fine house and store—the residence lined with local oak, named Okaka. Percy doesn't want any one to pity him. He lives like a king and there is no income tax in Papua. His house is cool and spacious. It has a refrigerator (well filled with liquid), a wireless (with plenty of static), and a garden with plenty of lettuce. I must say, however, that Papuan lettuce is only one jump ahead of grass. Papuan Percy says the climate is ideal for white men and women. If Australians only knew what a wonderful country it is they'd migrate in thousands to this Land of Opportunity.

His store is full of knick-knacks for natives. In the year 1939 over a thousand indentured labourers were recruited from Kikori for work on the plantations and oil-drills of the delta, and over £6000 was paid in wages. So Percy does a thriving business.

Besides trading he is also a Licensed Labour Recruiter. He travels up-river in his launch and visits the villages engaging

boys. To seal the bargain he gives the recruit a looking-glass, a fishing-line, some fishhooks, a scrub-knife, a belt, a cloth rami, three sticks of tobacco, a plate and spoon. The departing breadwinner gives the looking-glass, the fishing-line and hooks, and the scrub-knife to his family to solace and sustain them during his absence. He is signed on at Kikori, returns from service a year or more later, and is signed off before the magistrate. Then he goes to Percy's store with his pay and returns to his village with a big "bokis" of trade goods, baubles, gewgaws and good value.

Such is a trader's life.

In his spare time Trader Hinds runs a cattle station for fresh meat. He started his herd by importing three cows with calves, but the cattle got ticks. Farmer Percy sent to Port Moresby for a tick antidote, and received three beer bottles of disinfectant spray—without directions for use.

Squatter Hinds sprayed his cows and calves and killed the ticks—also the cattle, as they licked the spray and died. He had made it too strong and the arsenic poisoned them. The squatter then persisted with another lot of cattle brought up-river by boat—among them a valuable bull. All went well and the herd increased. Then Storekeeper Hughie Beach of Daru wanted to borrow the bull, so Percy booked a berth for a bovine passenger on the monthly boat that comes around.

Mail day arrived and the bull was yarded. But when they wanted to lead him to the boat, the bull bailed up and wouldn't budge. He was satisfied to stay at Kikori and didn't appreciate the prospects of a sea voyage. He squatted in the yard while a team of twenty reformed savages savagely pulled at his halter. The siren of the steamer bellowed louder than the bull, but still the bovine would not budge.

Percy got a brain-wave.

He lit a fire under the bull's bawls.

Startled, the sire of many a calf bawled, leapt skyward, and went bush. By the time they had caught him the steamer had gone, and Hughie Beach at faraway Daru remained bull-less.

So the evening passed with many a merry tale of the pleasures of pioneering in Papua, and I went to sleep lulled by the swish of the rain on the roof and the river.

Next morning I went up-river in the *Panawina* with Assistant Resident Magistrate Ivan Champion aboard. Our destination was

Ogamobu Rubber Plantation, where we were greeted by Mr Marshall the manager. After a sip of sipora, he showed me the plantation, 260 acres under rubber-trees, which have flourished to milking stage. There are 150 "boys" working on the property. They get ten shillings a month and food. I watched the tappers at their tasks bringing in the lactic latex in buckets to be coagulated, pressed and smoked in the factory, and exported in parcels of 100 pounds to Sydney.

We chugged on upstream into higher terrain—very beautiful country, with limestone hills covered in tall green trees and vines. It was a refreshing change from the flat monotony of the down-river mud and mangroves. Near the junction of the Sirebi River we stopped for a sip of sipora with Mr and Mrs Sid Reilly, who live in a Papuan thatched-roof house on high stilts with wide verandas.

Sid is a government surveyor, who is triangulating sites for future rubber plantations. Up and downstream he flaunts white calico banners on every bend of the river, to give him his angles and sights from his base line. It seems a lonely life, but the Reillys apparently enjoy it. I dips me topee to the brave white women of Papua, who follow their husbands to the wilderness, where it never rains but it pours.

Down-river again, and in the afternoon at Kikori, Magistrate Champion staged for my benefit a canoe race between three teams of Kikori scullers—twenty to a canoe. They were all the morning getting dressed for the part, and excitement was intense as the three long log canoes put out from the bank to the starting-point.

Amazing is the skill of the river men. They stand erect, balanced in their log-shells, and propel their craft with flat-bladed paddles while the coxswain steers with a large paddle at the stern.

Shouts from the spectators and crews as the sixty paddlers manoeuvred for position. They were dressed in their Sunday best riparian regalia, with plumed head-dresses, earrings of sapi-sapi shells, necklaces of pigs' tusks, dogs' teeth, and gold-lipped pearlshell, armbands of toea shell and plaited rattan, and anklets of the same. Covering their pudenda were long sporrans of tapa cloth, patterned in modernistic designs; and their rumps were gaily tufted with orchid crotons.

The starting-point was four furlongs upstream, and the crews



waited tense until the Magistrate fired his revolver for the start. Then the coxswains yelled and the paddles dipped in rhythmical unison with a long powerful sweep and a resonant thump as the blades smacked against the sides of the log craft. The canoes leapt forward suddenly like racehorses under the propulsion of magnificently muscled men, intent on victory. A tropic sun glinted on brown torsos and heavy rippling muscles, as the paddlers grunted and ploughed up the soupy Kikori.

The hillside near the finishing-point was covered with hundreds of spectators—wives, children, and soolers—who squealed with excitement as two of the canoes nearly collided. But the skilled coxswains dodged disaster, and the race revved up in a frenzy of splashing and shouts, as they all passed the Papuan flag on the *Panawina's* stern in a triple dead heat.

"Who won? Who won?" yelled the sixty sweating paddlers appealingly to Magistrate Ivan. The prize was a stick of tobacco for each man in the winning canoe.

Ivan shook his head judicially.

"Nobody won!" he announced loudly. "Dead heat. The race must be re-run!" All this in Motu, then *sotto voce* to me: "We must have a run for our money."

Back went the paddlers to the starting-point, police and prisoners vying for the prize, in a frenzy of fanaticism to display riparian skill.

Another start like a shot out of a gun. It was one of the most wonderful sights I have ever seen in my life as the canoes skimmed like swallows over the water. This was only sport—but two decades ago the canoeists of the Kikori depended on the prowess of their paddles for their very lives, in raids on neighbours and mid-river naval battles of fight and flight. Their skill is the inheritance of centuries, as the river is their stream of life. From babyhood they go fishing and sago-snatching amidst the reeds along its banks, criss-crossing its deep channel like water-beetles in quest of coco-nuts, crabs, or ducks. How they balance these hollowed logs is a mystery, but the secret is like riding a bicycle—get speed up and don't wobble.

The prows cleaved the water like an arrow in flight as the paddlers chanted "Hoi! hoi!" smacking the yellow water in giant scoops. A second time it was a dead heat—almost—so all got a stick of tobacco and everybody was satisfied.

So was I.

After the regatta, we retired to the veranda of Ivan Champion's house for a sipora and a yarn. Scholarly Ivan says he always wanted to be a sailor, but he became a land navigator instead. He taught himself surveying from books, and bought himself a sextant, then learned how to use it from the officers of S.S. *Montoro* when he was on a holiday trip to Australia.

Born 1904, at Port Moresby, he is ten stone two pounds in weight, and always loses a few pounds when he starts on a patrol. "But I soon pick it up again," said Ivan.

He told me that on his trip with Karius over the Great Central Divide from the Fly to the Sepik in 1927, he stood one day among the clouds on Mount Blucher and glimpsed through a rift the plateaux far to the east between the Strickland and Purari country. He vowed he would go there some day. For years he pondered while doing patrols, and finally sent in his application to be allowed to lead an expedition from the Strickland to the Purari.

A reply came from Sir Hubert Murray: "Only this afternoon the Government decided that Mr Jack Hides should do this patrol."

So Hides in 1935 discovered the Papuan Wonderland, and estimated that 200,000 people dwell on the grassy plateaux. After this report, with its narrative of constant fighting against the yodellers of the hills, Lieutenant-Governor Murray decided to send some patrols from Kikori into the grasslands, to bring the area under control and to map and take a census of the region.

The work of verifying Hides's discoveries was entrusted to Ivan Champion, as Assistant Resident Magistrate at Kikori. He decided to have a plane's-eye view of the whole terrain before slogging it on foot. Four reconnaissance flights were made; the first two from Mount Hagen in Mandated New Guinea in February 1936. He flew with Hides from Mount Hagen south over the densely populated valleys and over the razor-edged limestone hills towards Mount Leonard Murray, plotting the river-systems and discovering a lake ninety miles north-west of Kikori. This was named Lake Marguerite after Mrs Jack Hides. The rivers where Hides had been greeted with yodels and spears were reconnoitred from the air, and mapped as a guide to the topography of the grid-system flowing eastward to the Upper Purari.

Then, in March 1936, Ivan Champion was passenger in the Fairchild Amphibian plane of the Archbold collecting expedition,

on yet another reconnaissance over the Kikori and Purari headwaters. Taking off from Daru on 24 March 1936 the Amphibian flew up the Turama River till Mount Leonard Murray was sighted, then wheeled northwards to photograph Lake Marguerite.

The Amphibian returned to its base, and Ivan Champion collated his air-notes into a map on which he plotted a course for a grand cross-country foot hike.

The Bamu-Purari patrol was ready to start in April 1936. The leader was Ivan Champion. His assistant was Patrol Officer C. T. Adamson—better known as “Bill” Adamson. “He was chosen,” says Ivan, “because I thought he would be a good companion, and I was not mistaken.”

Thirty carriers were enlisted from the Port Moresby gaol. “I never had such a loyal band as these prisoners,” declared Ivan.

There were also twelve armed native constables. Eight thousand pounds of rice were carried, in sealed tins of 43lb. each.

On 25 April 1936 Champion and Adamson started up the Bamu River in the launch *Vailala*. The stores had been sent ahead by canoes in charge of Native Sergeant Orai and seven police. Sixty-five local carriers were recruited for the first month’s journey. Five days later the *Vailala* grounded at the limit of navigation, 160 miles up a tributary of the Bamu, named the Wawoi. There Camp No. 1 was made, and the *Vailala* returned downstream.

On 3 May Champion started his long inland trudge, following up the Wawoi River to Wawoi Falls: “a magnificent sight, as the river plunged over a drop of 120 feet. Columns of spray rose like steam from a giant cauldron, forming a mantle of white against the green forest, and the trees on the bank were swaying to and fro with the air-currents caused by the falling water.”

The explorers transported themselves and their stores above this miniature Niagara, and toiled up the Wawoi valley, reaching their Camp No. 8 on 26 May, near a swampy lake which has since been named Lake Campbell, in honour of Mr Stuart Campbell, air pilot. The patrol was now well advanced into unexplored and uncontrolled terrain, and the free coastal carriers were sent back by canoe. The exploring party now consisted of Ivan Champion, Bill Adamson, twelve native police, twenty-seven Port Moresby prisoner-carriers, and two cooks.

Leaving Lake Campbell, the patrol pushed across country slowly, climbing all the time, and made their No. 11 Camp on

24 June at an elevation of 2530 feet. From here the leaders, with a light party, climbed Mount Leonard Murray, 7800 feet, but were disappointed at not being able to spy much of the land through the heavy clouds around the peak.

Progress around the north-western shoulder of Mount Leonard Murray was difficult and slow, as "this mountain massif may be likened to a giant octopus, the peaks being the head, and the spurs the long arms which run out for miles with deep gullies between".

Beri-beri struck the carriers as they clambered around the limestone arms of the octopus for a month, but Champion cured them with tinned vegetable extract, cod liver oil, and fish extract. On 17 August they reached the great Papuan plateau at their Camp No. 17, north of Mount Leonard Murray, which the natives call Bosavi, and less than ten miles south of the route traversed by Hides.

Here they met Stone Age men of light bronze skin with wigs of human hair adorned with buttercups. Across their foreheads were bands of snakeskin. They had ringlets in their ears. Their beards were skimpy, their faces streaked with ochre. They had shame belts of net, and rump coverings of green leaves.

A wig-man arrowed a pig, and skinned it with a bamboo knife. Says Champion: "The bamboo seemed as sharp as steel. When it got blunt he would tear a piece off the edge with his teeth."

Onwards toiled the party across ridge and plateau, meeting many friendly Stone Age men till they reached and crossed the Gigio River after twenty-six terrible days of fatigue, sickness, and sago-making. Camp No. 30 was made here on 7 October. This is the river which flows out of Ryan's Gorge—named by Hides—and debouches into the Kikori through limestone clefts 1000 feet deep. Here it was that the Hon. Staniforth Smith met with disaster in 1910 when the rafts were upturned and his carriers drowned.

Experienced Ivan got across safely and proceeded systematically across the razor-edged limestone range 3000 feet above sea-level, where it rained each day and the leeches had a feast. On 17 October the party came to the edge of the limestone and walked into the populated district loaded down with trade goods "and looking like Christmas-trees".

Next day "armed constable Maniti climbed a tree, and with a hip hoorah said he could see a big lake to the east". This was Lake Marguerite. But Champion questioned some local big-wigs

and found that the native name for the lake was "Kutubu". So, in accordance with the rules of the Royal Geographical Society, the native name was marked on the map.

From the top of a knoll on 18 October Champion saw the lake nestling in a limestone valley. It was fringed with sago and pandanus and fed by many a limpid stream. Two days later the party pitched camp on the shores of Lake Kutubu, and, launching a home-made canoe, paddled on its clear blue waters.

A local visitor came to sell pigs. Ivan wanted to buy a canoe, but the pig-haggler would not sell his 35-foot-long treasure. So Champion the conjurer poured some methylated spirit into a saucer, made some magic passes, and set the liquid alight. The chief's eyes goggled as he thought the white man could burn water, and his imagination visualized the whole of Lake Kutubu bursting into flames. Gladly he sold his canoe for a big knife to the sorcerer of the saucer, and next day a fleet of seventeen canoes arrived offering free transport across the lake to the magicians who could make water burn.

All the men and stores were moved across to a beautiful little bay where "we pitched camp and, looking across the lake, thought that even if we could go no farther, Kutubu had been worth our hard struggle".

The date was 23 October, six months since the departure of the patrol from the coast. Five days Champion spent in exploring the lake by canoe, estimating its length at twelve miles, its width two miles, and its height 2630 feet above sea-level. In parts it was ninety feet deep, with clear and beautifully pure water filtered from the enormous limestone masses surrounding it.

Four hundred natives live in five villages around the lake. They are sago-eaters—varying their diet with human flesh. . . .

The lake-dwellers were both glad and sad when their visitors departed northwards on 27 October. They were glad because their lake had not been set on fire, and sad because they couldn't get any more knives and beads for pigs and sago.

Camp No. 10 was made at a height of 3780 feet on a limestone range as the patrol pushed onwards towards the country of the Waga Furari—the land of the Yodelling Bowmen. Higher and higher they climbed. Says Champion: "High limestone gives one an eerie feeling. All is silent except for the gasping curses of struggling men. The stunted trees, clothed in thick moss like funeral drapery, stand like weeping mourners. Craters and fis-

tures are like yawning graves; and you think it must be the portals of hell."

Instead, it was the portals of the Waga Furari, the land of casuarinas, where the men yodel and fight, and the girls ogle and slap their buttocks. This was the place where Hides had to fight his way through jeering hordes the previous year. But the fame of his "boom boom" guns, and of his axes of steel, had resounded through the valley, and now the toupeed bowmen of Casuarina Land came eagerly to welcome the white man, with bananas, taro, cucumbers, and sugar-cane.

Their eyes goggled when Bill Adamson tipped out a bag of pearl-shell—fabulous wealth to the men of the inland—and eagerly they darted from their gardens, laden with food, or brought live pigs, anxious to exchange everything they possessed for sea-shore baubles.

Bill Adamson caused a furore among the Furari when he marked out a square of sticks on the ground and held up one shell—indicating it as the price for one square-full of sweet potatoes.

The silent salesman worked the oracle and the party got more food than they could carry.

On 3 November Champion reached the valley, densely populated, and five miles wide, which Hides had followed down to the Frave River. Champion crossed this valley without hostile incidents and continued northwards boldly into *terra incognita* towards the Great Dividing Range on the border of Mandated New Guinea. Passing through the grass country, he climbed higher and higher into bird-of-paradise country, and higher still into the tundras and peaks of the Main Range.

It was Anzac Day, 25 April, when he had left the coast, and on Armistice Day, 11 November, he made his Camp No. 52, at a height of 9270 feet, on the slopes of Mount Giluwe which towered above them to 13,660 feet. The weather was bitterly cold, and the carriers shivered as the track wound ever upwards to an altitude of 11,640 feet on the border, ten miles from Mount Hagen. Now the carriers staggered along, suffering from altitude sickness—their feet crunching icicles in frozen rock pools.

Champion set a course along the border eastwards midst moss and mist, and descended again to grass country. Here they met mountain tribes who had traded with the Leahy Brothers working

gold at Mount Hagen, as some of the mountaineers wore cut-off tins for bracelets.

Up and down the pinnacles and precipices of the Great Divide clambered the patrol for a month, until, on 15 December, they made Camp No. 79 on the slopes of Mount Karimui, 7000 feet high. Now they were only ten mountain miles from Hathor Gorge on the Upper Purari, so Ivan set his course southward and reached the river six miles below Hathor Gorge on Christmas Eve, making his eighty-sixth camp since leaving the faraway Bamu.

"We had pigeon stew and rice for Christmas dinner," said Ivan. "I had reached the spot where I had aimed for."

So, from the Bamu to the Purari, in eight months, Champion, Adamson, their police and prisoners, had trudged across the populous uplands of Papua, without taking or losing any lives—a remarkable tribute to the tact and experience of the young leader.

He was back on the track of MacGregor and Mackay. His party floated down-river in seven canoes, arriving at the mouth of the Purari on New Year's Eve.

Ivan Champion's exploration exploded the myth of the "Papuan Wonderland" publicized extensively by Hides in articles to the Australian press. Many readers of Hides's reports had the idea that the Papuan uplands would be ideal for agricultural settlement by whites. Champion pooh poohs this idea; he says that "the soil is poor, and hard work is necessary for the natives to get sufficient foods for their needs".

The most important discovery was Lake Kutubu, which Champion recommended as a site for a government station to control the inland area. He made the revolutionary recommendation that this station should be provided and maintained by a sea-plane alighting on the lake, as there are very few areas in the uplands suitable for aerodromes.

He estimated the population of the grasslands as not exceeding 25,000—only one-tenth of the number estimated by Jack Hides. No promise of great mineral wealth was found anywhere in the valleys traversed by the patrol.

When modest Ivan's report was perused by Papua's Number One Pappa, Lieutenant-Governor Murray, it was realized that Lake Kutubu—a deep and permanent freshwater supply—might prove

to be of decisive economic significance in the opening of the uplands. The lake is only ninety miles north-west of Kikori, so the next thing to do was to open up a direct overland route from Kikori to the mountain reservoir.

This job was entrusted to Assistant Resident Magistrate Claude Champion, a brother of explorer Ivan. He was instructed "to find a route to Lake Kutubu via the Mobi River, and report particularly upon the most suitable place for a police camp and an aerodrome".

Claude Champion with Patrol Officer F. W. G. Andersen, fourteen police, and ninety carriers, left Kikori on 28 April 1937. They had the launch *Vailala* and eight canoes in tow. After ten hours' chugging they reached the limit of launch navigation on the Kikori, and, establishing a base camp, sent the *Vailala* back downstream.

Claude Champion and Andersen then pushed upstream by canoe to the junction of the Mobi River on 14 May. They continued up the Mobi, passed Beaver's Falls, and limped over needle-pointed limestone to Digimu Creek. Now they were well into the Uncontrolled Area. However, by guile, blarney, and barter they got guides among the mountain-dwellers to show them the way to Kutubu.

Half the carriers were sent back to Kikori, and the remainder of the patrol plodded over the razor-edged ranges, arriving at the lake on 21 June. "And what a lake!" says Claude. "The water was gloriously blue, and high mountains could be seen to north and north-east."

The police thought they had come to a freshwater sea, as this limestone lake is the biggest in Papua. The villagers of Kutubu, who had pleasant memories of Ivan Champion's patrol, and fearfully remembered his water-burning necromancy, came forward with pigs and sago and eagerly bartered them for sea-shell.

After exploring the lake Claude looked for a landing ground and surveyed the surrounding limestone. Then, on 5 August, he started on a long and hazardous patrol towards the grasslands of the yodelling wig-men. With the two officers went ten police and thirty-six carriers. They crossed the Mubu, Augu and Wage rivers, and reached the lands of the Waga Furari. But, instead of skirting the densely populated plateau, as his predecessors had done, Claude Champion marched boldly up the Valley of the Hooters and Jeerers.

The fame of the White Man had preceded them and the Wild



Men of Waga Furari were not game to molest the expedition. Claude passed through their district without firing a shot in anger. On 23 August the party camped at 10,700 feet, then turned westward and southward to show themselves to the populace of Tari Furoro valley, where Hides had skirted and skirmished.

Says Claude: "These people are dandies, decorating themselves with coloured leaves and flowers. One man wore an exquisitely made purple wig." With presents, peaceful perorations and pantomime, the police party walked through the densely populated valley without losing or taking life, and returned over the rough limestone range to Lake Kutubu on 8 September.

So Claude Champion completed the discoveries of Jack Hides and Ivan Champion right up to the Great Divide. A matter-of-fact and modest man, he didn't write a book about his lengthy and hazardous patrol. On it Judge Murray commented: "Mr Claude Champion and Mr Andersen are to be heartily congratulated upon their very valuable contribution of peaceful penetration. The patrol was ably led through great difficulties and achieved the praiseworthy task of travelling for several weeks through practically unknown country without firing a shot."

Claude Champion returned to Kikori overland from Lake Kutubu leaving Patrol Officer Andersen with nine police at the lake. A few weeks later a seaplane arrived and alighted on Lake Kutubu, where a police strong-post was established for control of the grassy lands of be-wigged pan-pipers in the "Papuan Wonderland".

Sipping sipora, and yarning with quiet-voiced Ivan Champion on the veranda of the Residency of Kikori, I couldn't help feeling impressed by the calm efficiency of the government officers of Papua, who hazard their lives and suffer privations for the Murray policy of "peaceful penetration".

Hats off to the patrol officers—if the spears don't get them the *beri-beri* will. Nearly every man in Papua has scars on his legs—where tropical ulcers have healed, leaving a mark of Zorro.

These Australians are doing a job of work on the frontiers of savagedom, more hazardous perhaps than that of the Canadian North-West Mounted Police. Whenever a murder or massacre is committed among the primitives, out goes a patrol—and always gets its men. Instead of being hanged, the murderers are given a

job of grass-cutting in the calaboose for a year. Then they are sent back to their tribes to tell of the wonders of the white man's justice which doesn't permit the practice of the philosophy of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—particularly cannibal toothsome ness.

Ivan tells many a tale of the cannibals of Kutubu who ascribe death from natural causes to sorcery. Squatting round the corpse they hear voices from the body whispering the murderer's name. Out go a dozen avengers and spear the necromancer to death. Then there is a cannibal feast, as the cutlets of the criminal are wrapped in green bamboo leaves and distributed around the village for a barbecue.

The natives see no harm in this, and one of Ivan's camp servants at Kutubu, after a cannibal carouse, rubbed his belly, smacked his lips and confessed to Ivan the Terrible: "I ate the back."

The Plateau men are not yet fully pacified. On several occasions there have been arrow affrays in which native police have been shot. One day when Ivan was on patrol in a mountain village the locals suddenly showered arrows and spears. Ivan had to fire his revolver in self-defence at a savage who was aiming an arrow from six feet away.

The bowman fell dead. "It was a tragedy," confessed Ivan—"the only native I have ever had to shoot. I felt that all my work for years had been wasted when that man fell—but it was his life or mine."

Of this incident Judge Murray wrote: "Such an absolute waste of human life is much to be regretted, for every such clash adds a fresh difficulty to the final peace-making which is our objective. No blame is to be attached to any one, not even to the attacking native, and Mr Ivan Champion is to be congratulated that this was the only case of bloodshed in the whole time during which he has been engaged in his very difficult and dangerous task."

Summing up the Papuan Wonderland, Judge Murray says: "It is picturesque and interesting, but I see no reason to suppose that this part of the Territory will ever attract European settlement. For many years the area is likely to be a source of loss to the Papuan Government."

## CHAPTER XV

FAREWELL Kikori! I go aboard the *Panawina* on a shining Saturday morn loaded to the gunwale with souvenirs, spears, dogs' teeth, pigs' tusks, drums, bows and arrows, cassowary daggers, woven arm-bands, pearl shells, and other anthropological curiosa of the Delta Division.

Assistant Resident Magistrate Ivan Champion and his *petite* wife came to the wharf to God Speed us, amplified with an armful of fresh-made bread and four lettuces—the pride of the garden. Then Percy Hinds came along with more bread and we all sank a sipora on deck.

Along the banks of the Kikori a few hundred prisoners, police and villagers thumped drums, yelled, and waved good-bye, while our deckhands replied with cooees, and Maniara worked the fog-horn mournfully, like a calf bellowing for its ma. Round the bend Kikori Station was only a memory as we slithered among the sago swamps and mangrove margins of the delta maze.

We passed many canoes, the paddlers balancing desperately against our wash, fearful lest their keel-less log craft should overbalance, and tip yams, sago, wife and babies into the crocodiley stream.

At last we came to Aird's Hill, a mark for mariners 800 feet above mangrove-level—with a London Missionary Society station perched on the hillside, a lonely sign of civilization in hundreds of miles of muddy desolation. Following devious channels, the *Panawina* plugged on making its own wind, very comforting under the awning. I sat in a deck-chair, sipping sipora, and watching thousands of terns on the turns, lunching alfresco.

Plonk! went a tern into the soupy stream, and emerged with a fish in its bill—sometimes. Other times they missed, and plonked again for nimble fishlets. That reminded us it was lunch-time, so we had some bully beef garnished with Kikori lettuce. Alas! like the beanstalk that Jack climbed, this lettuce had grown too fast and had a flavour like couch grass. After eating it I felt like breaking out into a whinny.

We anchored at Urama village at the mouth of the Era River. Here we bought sago for our sailors, and then we drove on through the hydra-headed watercourses to drop anchor at dusk opposite Kaimare village, on the Baroi River—one of the mouths of the Purari.

This is the biggest village I've seen—and its architecture is different from all the others. There are about forty houses, large and small, with dubu-structure of a unique kind, triangular in shape, tall at the front, and tapering to the ground at the rear. Kaimare, alias Mudville, is the muddiest quagmire I've ever mired in. The mudscape made me think of the world at the beginning of Time, before land and water had been properly separated. There in the slime, while the rain teems down continuously, crocodiles emerge from palmy swamps to snap at pigs prowling in the mangroves.

It's amazing how a population of 1500 primitives could find sustenance in such a muddy Abomination of Desolation, where the soil is half liquid, and the air half moisture, as the tides swirl in and out from muck-flats to muck-flats, and the rivers revel and riot in yellow flood through a myriad of channels, creeks and canals. Here earth meets sea, and the silt of the plateaux has been washed for centuries to form the detritus of the delta.

The sun beats fiercely down, and sucks steam from the mud-flats, when the heavy clouds are not pouring their rain. Water is either always coming up or going down, and the mangrove and sago clumps drip with moisture. It is eerie, weird, and awesome, a puddled silence of slippery slime, and a solitude of gloomy ooze.

The Papuan Delta is the land of half and half—half mud and half water, both shifting and moving in geologic convulsions as the silt of the rivers is deposited in segments of slime, forming isles and islets, inlets and outlets, ever-variable and uncountable.

In this steamy tropical terrain dwell a race of amphibians—the mud tribes of Kaimare, who seek sustenance from sago, crabs and pigs. For this is the secret of delta nutrition: large crabs, as big as a soup plate, breed in millions in the mud, preyed on by pigs and Papuans. Also, the Papuans prey on the pigs, but the last laugh belongs to the crocodiles, catholic in their tastes, who munch crabs, pigs and Papuans with gustatory impartiality.

Life is just one big prey after another.

The delta of the Purari, 500 square miles of it, is the only

home which the amphibian tribesmen know, and Kaimare village is their metropolis. From here they sally forth through the labyrinthine water-lanes, seeking sago and stoush. Scorning the lurking crocodile, the nipping crab, and the stinging mosquito, they wade thigh-deep in ooze, spear in hand to catch crustaceans, pigs and pith. They load their canoes to the gunwale and paddle home to Kaimare. Each canoe is a hollowed log, jetsam of the river, one end stoppered with clay, the other end with the buttocks of the paddler's wife.

Nowhere in the world would you find more primitive people than the denizens of this reptilian ooze, bodies caked with mud, their fuzzy-tops like black fungi.

I went ashore in a dinghy, climbing up a ladder to the main street—a promenade board-walk, made of logs (many firm, many infirm) lashed across a framework of poles raised on piers, six feet above mud-level. This rickety stickety main street, about a quarter of a mile long, passes the front door of all the houses in the village. It's an adventure for a white man, but great fun for the babies and children of Kaimare when they fall off the main street into the mud below.

No rates for the Water and Sewerage Board here, as Old Ocean's tide flushes beneath the village daily—and freely. Women were crabbing in the mud-flats, as the tide was low. Squatting on their haunches, they shook sticks in the mud till the curious crabs came out to have a look. That was the last look they got, as the Dianas of the delta downed on them and embalmed them in palm-leaves, preparatory for dad's dinner.

The delta-dwellers were nearly naked, the men wearing a shame-girdle of bark or trade calico, the women a V-for-Victory of shredded sago-palm, with a tufted tail of fibre like that of a rocking-horse. Men, women, and children all had holes in their nasal septum and ear-lobes, with *pokiris* (nose-bones) of shiny shell or wood, and earrings of cassowary quills and fish bones. Necklets of dogs' teeth and ropes of shell were worn by almost all the villagers. Their coiffures, fantastically plucked, were adorned with white flowers of the nipa palm.

These Papuans are polygamists, and brides are swapped for pigs. Anthropologist F. E. Williams, a South Australian Rhodes Scholar, who dwelled in the delta for many malarial moons, says that the morals of the Purari people are very lax, and wife swapping is an old Kaimare custom. Husbands are not jealous, provided that the paramour pays a proper price—usually an

armlet of shell. The profits of profligacy must be divided by the erring wives with their cuckolded husbands. But the unmarried girls—though chased—are chaste.

The outstanding edifice of this village of amphibians is the Sacred House—named a Ravi—admission for men only. This is the most elaborately-built domicile in the delta town, constructed on a framework of rattan, thatched with nipa palm. It houses the innermost mysteries of the tribe, the dancing-masks, or wicker-work effigies named *Kaimunu*.

These fearsome objects, ten feet high, are isolated in the inmost recesses of the sacred house, and tended only by the elders, shrouded in mystery and magical potency. They are the god-devils of the river-mouth—prehistoric gargoyles controlling thunder, flood, and mud. These nightmare spirits cause sickness, calamity and sudden death. But they bring good luck to the true believers.

Also in the sacred dwelling are "Kwois", flat oval man-sized boards, usually about six feet high, something like a shield, weirdly painted with grotesque faces of ghostly and ghastly spirits.

I crept by a rickety staging into the Ravi House, poised on piles above the noisome muck, where pigs and children wallowed in search of crabs. In the gloom of the ghastly temple was a stench from a golgotha of pigs' skulls. After coming from the bright sunlight, I could see nothing except some white ghost-like shapes, then gradually I saw these kwoi-wraiths, limned with staring eyes and grinning lineaments of ghostly apparitions, delineated by artists of the past.

Squatting flat-rumped among the ghostly kwois were three skinny old men—bags of skin and bone—who gazed at the cannibal caricatures in senile reverie. One of the old men guided me in the gloom to the inner sanctum, where he showed me the river god-devil squatting grotesque like a monstrosity in a side-show. In the dimness it looked like a camel-backed shark, with gaping crocodile jaws, delicately balanced on four cassowary legs with prehensile claws. Deeper in the Chamber of Horrors was another rattan demon, shaped like a dugong, with a mouth like the whale that ingurgitated Jonah.

What with coastal fever, stench, heat and horror, I felt the oppression of superstition and, shivering, turned on my heel, glad to be out of the Ravi House to stand once again on the main street of slippery poles in the steaming rain.

I was never much of a church-goer anyway. Wherever I have wandered, I have been bamboozled by the many kinds of religion—all striving to explain the inexplicable, comfort widows, and console the dying. The only result is to make the mysterious universe seem even more mysterious than it is.

The delta-dwellers, like all the rest of us, learn their religion as boys, get through their catechism and confirmation and believe what the old men tell them. Thus all their doubts are put at rest, and they praise the gods for bounties, and curse the devils for misfortunes.

The Papuan primitives have one house in every village reserved for men only, an exclusive club where the men can get away from domestic worries, nagging wives, and squeaking kids for a quiet snooze on a bed of beaten bark, or a puff of the pipe or chew of the betel—safe from molestation by their bitter halves—beg pardon, better halves. Thus they pioneer the path for the segregation of the sexes, practised by sophisticated swanks of Sydney in exclusive clubs for *homo sapiens* where no flippant females need apply.

Once upon a time the Kaimare villagers were cannibals, but the Murray Policy of Brotherly Love has spoiled the fun. Now, in the Ravi House, the old men dream of the glorious days of yore—when a feed was a picnic, and the enemy was absorbed in gastric juices. As I looked at the grizzled, nose-plugged, ear-pierced old chief in the Ravi, I wondered how many heads he had taken and human ribs he had gnawed. He glared back at me balefully, seeming to curse the white man and his dietary restrictions.

I returned to the *Panawina* via the elevated sidewalk, pursued by a horde of savages flourishing cassowary-thigh daggers—not belliciously but for the specific purpose of barter, a thigh-bone for a stick of tobacco. Although I was laden with the spoils of the Kikori, we took aboard a cargo of delta trinkets, while the tide came up over the mud, bringing with it the Gift of the Sea, a daily benison of crabs to feed the people of Kaimare.

The stream flows on and we must aweigh—and away we go from the jungle-mudders of the delta, weaving our way through many a serpentine creek to reach the ocean, where the blue water stained with mud does not get salty for several miles off shore. Then we cruised eastward by the mouths of the Purari—the Panaroa, the Aivei, and the Alele—skirting Orokelo Bay, and came to the mouth of the Vailala River, which rises in the Ku-Ku

Ku-Ku country, and cascades over many a waterfall to pour its mud and flood into Papua's gaping gulf.

Next we came to Kerema village, on the Matupa River, seat of the Resident Magistrate of the Gulf Division. But we didn't call in as Skipper Teddy Mears could see that I was nearly a cot-case with coast fever.

"The sooner I get you to Port Moresby the better," he growled.

"I'm a bit your way," I growled in reply, as I returned to the ocean a choice meal of Kaimare crab.

So we wended our way homeward past the Lakekamu and Biaru rivers, until we dropped anchor at Oiapu on Sunday night.

What a night! A night of nightmares as I slept on board, and the *Panawina* rolled uneasily in the heavy beam swell coming up from the south-east with all the weight of the Pacific Ocean behind it. I didn't know whether I had coast fever, malaria, dengue or dog's disease. But I knew I had Papuan palpitations as my mouth and throat were dry, my ear drums flapped, and the fever danced a fandango in my bloodstream.

What a fool I was not to take quinine before leaving Sydney! Bitterly I regretted my heedlessness of advice as I lay turning and burning in my bunk, drinking pints of water and retching quarts, then sweating gallons—midst sea-quakes and bed-quakes, alternately heated on the hobs of hell, and frozen on Antarctic blitz-blizzards of delirium, as my teeth knock-knocked like castanets, while the omnivorous plasmodia of fever cannibalized my red corpuscles into shandy-blood.

Looking back, I think that I caught the fever on the Fly River, when I committed the unforgivable sin of sleeping on deck without a gnat-gnat net, and the malarial mosquitoes found me an easy mark. I had omitted the precaution of a prophylaxis of quinine. But when the fever smote me I took a double dose—and then I had quinine quavers added to all the other symptoms.

Vaguely I heard Teddy shouting to Maniara to heave out another adjectival anchor as the launch was drifting on the lee shore—but I didn't care if we crunched the coral or sank in the surf. In my ears was a throb of tom-toms, a Goaribari memory evoked by quinine quenzies throbbing in my tympanum—a Rhapsody Papouasie—as the fever ebbed and flowed from polar to equatorial temperatures, and I passed from the nadir of depression to the zenith of elation, through the epicentre of rigor mortis, to the perihelion of Papuan palpitations.



So I lay comatose in my bunk, fire and ice coursing through my arteries, regretting my unsuccessful joust with the *Anopheles* of the Fly. . . .

Came the dawn, and the fever subsided. So I went ashore at Oiapu for a shower and breakfast at Oil Manager Kodyen's house, and after that rode my old friend the bucking stallion to see the oil well. The day stallion was better than a nightmare.

Back on board, I watched the skill of the Papuan shoresmen as they darted through the surf in their outrigger canoes to fish for lobsters on the coral reef. Civilization has gentled them, and they wear diving-glasses, which makes them look professorial and scholastic; but they follow the aeons-old technique of their forefathers in pursuing the lobster to his lair. There is no subtlety about it, they just take a deep breath, dive to the bottom and catch the lobster with their bare hands.

It's easy. Try it—but be sure the lobster doesn't get in first with his nip.

They immobilize him by grasping his carapace firmly around the midriff from above, while his pincers vainly flail. The secret of it is that, through anatomical deficiency, a lobster can't scratch his own back.

As the crustaceans were captured, the nimble natives tied them with rattan thongs to a floating pole, keeping them alive and kicking—no refrigerator needed.

Farewell Oiapu, and we cruise along the coast eastwards to reach Yule Island at sundown. I went ashore as guest of the Resident Magistrate, William Henry Thompson, "Tomo" for short, born Exeter, Devon, in 1887. Tomo is a tropical Englishman. As a youth he joined the Gloucester Regiment, and served on garrison duty in India, at Bombay and Lahore. Then, in 1911, he came to Papua, enlisted as a patrol officer, and was stationed at Kikori with Resident Magistrate Ryan.

When the drums of war throbbed in Europe in 1914, Tomo farewelled the dubus and drums of Papua, rejoined his regiment, and was sent to the Cameroons in West Africa for the duration. Back to Papua in 1924. He's been there ever since, and now he's one of the senior officers of the government service, with thirty years' tropical experience.

After a dinner of pigeon and fish, I walked with Tomo around the coral beach to the Sacred Heart Mission for a yarn with the bearded fathers. Here I met Father Andre Dupeyrat, author of

a 550-page scholarly history of the mission entitled *Papouasie*, published in Paris in the French language. Illustrated with many photographs and maps, his book tells of the great achievements of the missionaries in banishing the darkness of paganism, and helping to make wild Papua tame. The author presented me with a copy of his book, which is one of my great treasures—although my education is *sans* French.

Back along the beach I crunched with the Magistrate, beneath many a coco-nut palm grove, to sleep that night on terra firma instead of heaving aqua. But still the fever tossed, turned, burned and froze me, as a kaleidoscope of Kikori coursed through my febrile visions and I could see—or thought I could—painted and plumed savages with pigs' teeth in their septums, shouting and thumping their paddles in a mad regatta across the ceiling.

Another tropic day dawned, its hot breath tempered with the cool breeze from the gulf. I showered and shaved, then breakfasted with Tomo on porridge doused with goat's milk, fresh-caught fish, and fresh-shot wild black duck, topped off with custard apple.

At 7 a.m. I went out with the Magistrate to inspect the prisoners' parade. A couple of hundred grinning culprits were lined up under the coco palms, naked except for small shame belts, their fuzzy tops like black haloes. Well fed and soft muscled, their skins sleek, the prisoners seemed to be enjoying their punishment.

They are feminine-looking men from the valley of the Saint Joseph, and the hinterland of Fofofoto towards the slopes of Mount Albert Edward, which towers to 13,300 feet on the Great Dividing Range. Thin shouldered and hipped, they are of feminine build, with figures any woman might envy. In appearance they are quite different from the ugly muscular savages of the Kikori and Fly. They are sissy boys with frangipanni in their hair.

Magistrate Tomo welcomed a new batch of 120 tax defaulters, just sent down from the hinterland by Mick Healy, who was away on a Papuan prowl-patrol, near Mount Yule. The prisoners sheepishly grinned as Tomo told them they would have to behave themselves while in gaol, and work like good boys building a breakwater of coral hewed from the hillside.

The grinning felons did not seem at all repentant, as they followed their leader in a big gang through the coco-nut grove to fetch and carry coral. Each man had a piece of dried coco-nut frond, a yard long, broadened at the end like a spoon. Into this

carryall a lump of coral, about the size of an emu's egg, weighing about seven pounds, was laboriously loaded by two rogues, then a third hoisted the burden to his shoulder, and gently ambled away to dump his load at the end of the breakwater.

Like insects building a coral reef for a thousand years, the queenie tax defaulters are slowly constructing Tomo's masterpiece, a Maginot Line to enclose a haven for ships that need safe anchorage. At present rate of progress it will take another hundred years, I guess, to finish the job. But Papua is the Land That Time Forgot, where primitive criminals smile, as they expiate their crimes, under the sway of a paternally despotic Government.

Tomo told me that one time he arrested a murderer and gaoled him. Next day the murderer's brother arrived with two bob, and wanted to buy him off.

"Nothing doing," said Tomo.

At 9.15 a.m. I was back on the *Panawina*, heaving up my breakfast of black duck, as the anchor was heaved.

The seven hours' run from Yule Island to Port Moresby was a daymare. My head was splitting with throbs, and a blaze of light, entering my retina, seemed like a sear of lightning. Teddy Mears gave me a pair of smoked glasses to relieve the glare, as he gloomily prophesied "You'll be in hospital to-night!"

Full Diesel ahead throbbed the propellers. Then Teddy set a sail to help us along, as a merry breeze came up from the south. The ship heeled to an angle and stayed there, as the screw raced half in and half out of the heaving waves. In the stuffy cabin below I tossed and turned, sweated and groaned, as the vibrations of the engine drove me to a frenzy. Then I prowled on deck in quest of a rest, looking for a soft place to set my heavy head.

I tried a coil of rope, but it was out in the burning sun near the bow, and spray came over the rails to drench my tepid epidermis. Then under an awning I clung to the mainmast for a while, but I was too weak to cling for long, as the slope of the deck and the pitch and toss made it hard work.

At last I found a haven of repose—on the hatch—my head and shoulders pillowed in the soft luff of a leg-o'-mutton sail. It was heaven, and I relaxed into dreams and hopes of home.

Suddenly something happened. A guba—a sudden gale from the wrong direction—hit the ship. It filled out the sail, and flung

my fever-racked body across the deck, bang against a stanchion, and I collapsed in the scuppers, gone with the guba.

Back I crawled into my bunk, and the rest of the journey was one big throb until, at 4.15 p.m., the *Panawina* tied up alongside the wharf in Port Moresby's calm basin.

So ended my three weeks' cruise around the Gulf of Papua. I started with high hopes and ended with high fever. Staggering to the pub I spent a night of delirium—and awoke next morning feeling fine.

## CHAPTER XVI

BACK at the pub in Port Moresby after my gambol in the gulf, I was greeted by pilot Tommy O'Dea of Guinea Airways, full of plans for the Easter holidays. A party of fourteen Port Moresbyites had chartered his plane for a week-end flip to Goilala, a new police station, 6500 feet above sea-level, to the east of Mount Yule. It was a chance for the coast-tied townsmen to see the wonderland of the inland, and to have a picnic among the cannibals, while bringing good cheer and beer to the lonely patrol officers in this remote spot.

Would I join the party? asked Tommy.

Would I!

It was going to be a great party, at £5 a head—beer and whisky to cost £4-19-0, and food one shilling.

The plane was to leave at eleven o'clock next morning, Good Friday, but after breakfast I felt a bit light-headed, so I staggered up the hill in search of a doctor, to get some dope to fortify me in my fever. I found Doctor May, whom I had met four years previously at Cloncurry in western Queensland, when I flew with him in the Flying Doctor plane to Normanton.

"Hello, Doc!" I said, "I'm leaving by plane in half an hour for Goilala, but I feel a bit crook. Can you give me some dope to brighten me up?"

The doctor took my temperature. It was 104.6 degrees. Then he prodded my spleen; pressed my pulse; fried a flounder on my brow; gave an audition by stethoscope to my heart-beat rhythm; sphygmomanometered my blood-pressure; turned back my eyelid and gazed hypnotically into the secrets of my retina; tested the aridity of my tongue; invited the pathologist to test my sputum; took a microscope smear from a needle-prick on my digit, and then nodded diagnostically as he murmured:

"Ah, yes. Benign tertian!"

"Benign?" I groaned. "Sounds bloody malign to me. What's the treatment?"

"Hospital."

"But I've got to leave on the plane for Goilala in half an hour!"

"Not if I can help it," said Doctor May. "You're leaving for hospital in half a minute, because if you go to Goilala you'll come back a corpse!"

So there I was on Good Friday and with no Hot Cross Buns. I was put on a Spartan diet of aspirin and quinine—varied by quinine and aspirin.

How the sweat poured out of me! I heard the roaring of the plane, as the Goilala gang took off for their mountain merry-making, but it was nothing compared with the quinine roaring in my ears.

Sponged all over, a cool fan playing on my fevered brow, several glasses of iced milk—and I began to feel nearly half a man.

My pyjamas were absolutely drenched with sweat, but I managed to hold down the quinine and aspirin—the only things I'd held down for a week. Later, midst quakes and quivers of the British Pharmacopoeia, I kept down some sago, soup and jelly. And so the cure commenced, while I gazed at the hospital walls so spick and white and moaned to myself, "Why did I ever leave home?"

For five days I sweated and slathered in moods of malarial jitters, depression, oppression, and suppression, while every two hours the devoted nurses gave me innocent looking tablets of bisulphate of quinine to quell the pranks of the plasmodia in their malarial merry-go-rounds. The nurses were so sweet that I didn't notice the bitter taste of the drug.

Between bouts of fever and during convalescence I probed the symptoms and history of malaria, as I object to being attacked by an anonymous enemy.

Malaria has been known for centuries under the names of ague, swamp fever, jungle fever, shivers and shakes. The word means "bad air" derived from a bad guess made by the ancients as to its origin in fetidity.

Historical guessers have guessed that malaria was the cause of the disappearance of many ancient civilizations, including those of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Babylon, Angkor, Borobudur, Maya, Cyrenaica, and Arabia Felix—but one guess is as good as another.

The symptoms are chilliness, chattering teeth, constant vomiting,

white fingers, blue nails, stiff joints, dry skin, followed by drenching sweat; then a pause of normality, followed by another cycle of similar symptoms.

Everybody knew the symptoms of malaria, but nobody knew the cause of it. Then a cure was discovered in the 17th century, when an Aztec High Priest cured Countess Chinchon, wife of the Governor of Peru, with infusions from the bark of a South American tree, indigenous to the Andes. In gratitude, the Governor named the secret remedy cinchona bark. Samples were taken back to Europe by Jesuit missionaries who used its infusions to cure ague, and the miraculous remedy then got the name of "Jesuits' Bark".

Ultimately the pharmacists got the secret of the tree, and marketed the drug under the name of "Quinine"—a crystalline alkaloid purified from an infusion of cinchona bark. There was a rush for the drug, and the cinchona trees of Peru were almost exterminated. Then the Dutch Government in 1854 sent an expedition to South America and souvenired a shipment of the curative trees, which were acclimatized on the hills of Bandung in Java. The plantations have flourished and increased in their new home, and now Java has practically a monopoly of the world's supply of quinine. The monopolistic Dutch jealously guard seedlings, and the secrets of factory preparation of the bisulphate. When I was in Bandung I was not allowed to visit quinine plantations or factories. So the Dutch keep the world's temperature down—and the price up.

International scientists got to work on the puzzle of malaria, and, in 1880, a French physician named Charles Laveran discovered, at Constantine in Algeria, that the disease is caused by a parasite on the red corpuscles of the blood. This set Italian investigators on the track and further studies of the parasite were made by Golgi, Celli and Grassi, who investigated the tertian and quartan phases. Dr Patrick Manson found out a bit more. Then in 1892 Dr Donald Ross, in India, started a thorough research of the life-history of the malarial parasite.

He made the astonishing discovery that the disease is transmitted from man to man per medium of the blood-sucking mosquito named *Anopheles*, which probes with its proboscis into the blood-stream of a sufferer and sucks the malarial germ into its abdomen. The female of the species is more deadly than the male. She is the go-between from blood to blood.

There, in the belly of the *Anopheles*, the tiny plasmodium of

the disease becomes sexual and reproduces itself. Then the blood-sucking *Anopheles* gets hungry again, and goes for another feed. If she alights on a pure-blooded innocent there is great glee among the malarial plasmodium in the insect's intestine. While *Anopheles* is merrily sucking blood, the malarial germs emerge from her proboscis and start swimming through the life-stream of the victim.

Now they're in their element, as they breed in billions and the great Battle of the Blood begins.

Blood is composed of white corpuscles and red corpuscles, which course through arteries and veins in a fluid named the "plasma". The malaria parasites attack the red corpuscles and destroy them in billions, as the bloody battle rages. The red corpuscles cannot defend themselves, but the white corpuscles come to the rescue. They are the warriors of the blood-stream. With flags flying, drums beating and bugles blaring, they dash to the defence of their red brothers and gobble the invading malarial swarms.

If the white corpuscles are strong enough, the invading malaria is put to rout; but if the white defenders are outnumbered in this sanguinary blitzkrieg, the red cells are destroyed, the heart pumps furiously, the temperature rises, the brain does not get a full supply of life fluid, and the patient gets delirious.

Enter the new ally—quinine.

Quinine is swallowed, enters the stomach, dissolves, and passes into the arteries. As it goes on its bitter way, it brings panic and devastation to the malarial germs which curl up their toes and give up the ghost. Quinine has the peculiar property of being poisonous to the malaria parasite, while not interfering with the white corpuscles. The wise man, who understands the symptoms when an attack advertises itself, immediately takes quinine as a prophylactic to prevent paroxysms. . . .

As I lay fever-tossed on a bed in Port Moresby hospital the Battle of the Blood raged through my arteries and brain. Like Gulliver attacked by a billion invisible Lilliputians, I was bound and helpless on the bed—a battleground of Reds versus Whites.

The war waged from my aorta, through the carotid, subclavian, visceral, parietal, and iliac arteries, pulsating to the Ultima Thule of the vascular system, while General Red and Field-Marshal White fought for supremacy.

White won when Generalissimo Quinine stabbed the plasmodial invaders in the back with a well-planned flank attack, which



wiped them out faster than they could breed reinforcements. My spleen bulged as it enlarged itself to accommodate the vanquished red cells which are buried therein. It swelled in the abdominal cavity like a distended barrage balloon, and every moment I expected it to burst.

All day long the noise of battle rolled in cycles of ferocity and sinister symptoms of lassitude, coma, excitation, cold sheet shivers and bush-fire fevers, as the micro-parasites fought to a finish in a war of extermination. . . .

That is the physiology of malaria, but what about the psychology of it?

As the war raged from cold feet to hot cranium, I suffered a series of beautiful and terrible delusions and hallucinations. My saviour, Generalissimo Quinine, infected me with quininism, which causes a heavenly buzzing in the ears, like the twanging of a myriad of golden harps plucked by ethereal cherubs, sometimes like static on the short wave, and sometimes like the engaged signal on the telephone.

Buzz, buzz, blasted buzz.

As the red corpuscles failed to feed my cerebrum with sufficient nourishment to make it think straight, a series of apocalyptic visions soared through my skull—a malarial melodrama of unreality. My eardrums throbbed with the tom-toms of a Papuan symphony, and I fancied I was under the spell of a dubu sorcerer, while myriads of befeathered Papuans danced in mad array for a cannibal feast, their faces haloed in a fuzzy-top chiaroscuro.

The intermittent delirious dream of crazy surrealism ebbed and flowed as the plasmodial battle of the protozoa waxed and waned, advanced and retreated. All my Papuan experiences passed in a crazy kaleidoscope to the pulse-beat of the tom-tom rhythm.

Between bouts I was perfectly calm and lucid. On Good Friday I was flat out and feverish; on Easter Saturday I felt so well that I wanted to leave hospital. However, on Easter Sunday the shivers and shakes started again—but not so severe.

Then, on Easter Monday, I was convalescent enough to hobble out on the veranda in my pyjamas for a chat with another patient.

His name was Charles Karius, leader of the Karius-Champion patrol from the Fly to the Sepik in 1927.

Magistrate Karius was suffering from a severe bout of gastric malaria, and his weight was down to seven stone. He was smitten

so badly at Kikori that his heart was just turning over, so he was brought to Port Moresby by Tommy O'Dea in a seaplane.

After service with the A.I.F. as an artilleryman in France in the 1914-18 war, Karius came to Papua in 1920, and for twenty years served the Commonwealth of Australia in this outpost of fuzzy-tops and palms. He was thirty-four years of age when he made his classic march across the mountains from the Fly to the Sepik—and his sojourn in hospital was a sequel to his ordeals on that adventure.

It is tragic that poor Charles never recovered from this illness. He came to Sydney in search of specialist treatment, but died in September 1940, aged forty-seven.

Vale Karius of Kikori.

While convalescing on the hospital veranda I was honoured by a visit from Mr Leonard Murray, who was then Government Secretary, and has since (in December 1940) been appointed Administrator of Papua in succession to his uncle, the late Sir Hubert Murray.

Leonard Murray, born 1887, told me that he first came to Papua in February 1909, as personal secretary to Judge Hubert Murray. He's been here ever since, as the Government's right-hand man, conducting official correspondence and keeping the records of the Executive Council. He knows almost every part of Papua from first-hand knowledge, as he travelled with Sir Hubert on hundreds of visits of inspection from the Western Division to the eastern islands, up rivers and down mountains, through jungles and in and out of many bays.

To his many official duties he added that of skipper of the government steam-yacht *Laurabada*.

Leonard Murray is a son of the late Mr Aubrey Murray, half-brother of Sir Hubert. In his early days in Sydney, Leonard attended Fort Street school and afterwards became well-known as a champion amateur swimmer, and a leading member of the Bondi Life Saving Club.

As secretary to Sir Hubert he gained a unique knowledge of Papua and its problems, and a thorough understanding of the Murray policy and tradition. He married Pauline, daughter of the late Judge Herbert of Papua, and has one son. A man of pleasant personality and tact, he is very popular with the European community and respected by the natives as only a Murray can be.

His appointment as Administrator of Papua in succession to Sir Hubert was a foregone conclusion, and was officially announced at Canberra in December 1940, ten months after Sir Hubert's death, and following an interregnum during which the Hon. H. W. Champion was Acting-Administrator.

I found Leonard Murray a man of naturally pleasant manners and a temperament devoid of swank, but gifted with innate dignity which admirably fits him for his high post of responsibility. He would not tell me much about himself. But I pressed for information on the early discoveries in the Kikori delta, when he travelled with his uncle midst the mud and mangroves of that rainy region looking for a site for a government station, and found it with the aid of his brother-in-law-to-be C. G. Garrioch.

"I remember the day, 14 February 1910, quite distinctly," says Hon. Leonard, "because a leech fell from a tree into my right eye, and hid itself behind my eyeball. He stayed there for twenty hours while I anxiously awaited for him to commence boring operations. The pain was intense, but the leech poked out its tail, and Engineer Doig of the *Merrie England* managed to grab it by closing the points of a pair of dividers. Then there was a tug of war, as Doig pulled and the leech hung on—but Doig eventually won."

Leonard Murray has many a tale to tell of the long regime of his distinguished uncle.

"It will be hard for Sir Hubert's successor," said Leonard Murray, "as he was a man of outstanding distinction. His physical development was phenomenal, and he was a skilled boxer, footballer, and swordsman in his young days, in addition to being a brilliant classical scholar. Until he was over seventy he retained his extraordinary muscular development, and his patrols in the mountains, plains and swamps of Papua involved ordeals of endurance on men years younger than himself—as I can testify with feeling."

Leonard went on to tell me that Sir Hubert was indifferent to the comforts of life, and seemed to prefer austerity of conditions and simplicity of food: "We travelled together on the little *Eleva*, only sixty feet in length, a total distance of 144,000 sea miles, most of it high seas. No acrobatics of the vessel ever disturbed him. I have often seen him, sitting on deck in his lashed chair, up to his waist in foam, reading a Greek

book, and I have also seen the top of a sea flick the book out of his hand."

Sir Hubert's greatest asset was a sense of humour, very valuable in dealing in court with natives accused of murder. On one occasion, having heard the accused's defence, Judge Murray said: "Yes, that sounds all right, but are you telling the truth?"

To which the accused replied: "Taubada, no good I lie along you. You no bloody fool!"

Judge Murray always said that this was the highest compliment ever paid to him. No doubt Sir Hubert Murray will be a hard man to follow, but Leonard Murray has the right qualifications to follow him.

Such a clan tradition of tropic administration is unique in the British or any other Empire, and Australia is extremely lucky in possessing men of the Murray quality to uphold our Flag of Stars on coral strand, muddy delta and grassy mountain top, in the torrid Territory athwart our Naked North.

## CHAPTER XVII

CONVALESCENT, I left Port Moresby hospital after five days, feeling elated at the quick cure, but still a bit groggy on my pins, and consoled by old-timers, who told me that a touch of fever is nothing to worry about as it's only Papua's welcome to a new-chum.

"Now you're over it," they said, "take quinine night and morning, and mitigate the next attack."

So I did, and resumed my Papuan prowling. . . .

I lunched with Roland Oldham, an amateur conchologist and photographer. With pride he showed me his collection of sea-shells: Mollusca of many species from tropic and temperate zones. Collecting sea-shells is a hobby, like philately and numismatics. The conchologists are swapologists, and correspond with one another, like ex-libris devotees, gloating over new and rare acquisitions.

Collector Oldham showed me ear-shells from New Zealand as big as a saucer, and speckled cone-shaped *Lithoconus* from Port Moresby—a good thing to use as a beer-glass substitute when dinkum glasses are unavailable.

The pride of the collection was a skull-shaped *Aurora*—an amber cowrie from Fiji—very rare. Once upon a time the Fijian chiefs claimed all *Aurora* cowries as Royal property, bestowing them on heroes like Victoria Crosses, but since the coming of the white man, the Fijian natives destroy all the *Auroras* to prevent them from falling into the hands of the profane.

Collection conscious, I mooched uphill to the Government Anthropological Museum, and met Mr F. E. Williams, South Australian Rhodes Scholar, who spent many months in the Purari delta delving into the domiciles of the he-men of Kaimare. He has strong views on the ethics of collecting curios from savages and told me over a sip of sipora that collections should be made only when objects have scientific value for the study of anthropology to throw light on primitive culture.

Mere "curios" are of no interest to science, and curio-grabbers

should be restrained. His ideal Papuan museum is one which contains specimens of native arts, crafts, and religious symbols from all the regions of Papua. He does not want rare objects, but common objects to represent the true ethnographical habits of the Papuans.

Unfortunately the Papuan official collection is very small and poorly housed, and it is obvious that opportunities have been missed during the last fifty years of building up a record of primitive lore which could have been unique as a record of the mingling of Polynesian and Melanesian culture-streams. Like many other things in Papua, the official museum has languished through lack of funds. Sir Hubert Murray asked the stingy Australian Government for pounds but got only pennies. "Papua," say the officials, "is the Cinderella of Canberra. We have no votes, so the Australian politicians don't care."

Wake up Australia! Give Papua a member of Parliament.

Anthropologist Williams is an author. It strikes me that Papua is a breeding-ground of malaria and authors. Judge Murray encouraged a pure literary style in the reports of patrol officers, and so, many of them joined the ranks of the fountain-pen fighters, and published their reminiscences in bulky tomes. Monckton, Humphries, Hides, Champion, and Judge Murray himself have published thrilling stories of their Papuan prowls. Missionaries such as Rev. Chalmers and Father Dupeyrat have told the story from the soul-saving angle; and fictioneers such as Beatrice Grimshaw and Jack McLaren have penned many a torrid tale of Fuzzy-top Land—of palms, coral and conquest.

Now the anthropologists have weighed in for the literary stakes with Malinowski's *Sexual Life of Savages in North-west Melanesia*, Leo Austen on Megalithic Structures, and F. E. Williams on Bull-Roarers, Horticulture, Depopulation and the Ravis of Kaimare, etc..

But most thrilling of all the Papuan prose compositions are the official Annual Reports for 1889 to 1939—fifty years of classic chronicles, wherein the two knights of Port Moresby, Sir William MacGregor and Sir Hubert Murray, have recorded for all time the gradual irresistible exploration and subjugation of a vast and mysterious terrain. In these thrilling pages is many a story of heroism, honour, and devotion to duty, told with fatherly pride and supplemented by the matter-of-fact reports of the patrol officers themselves—written in field books from day to day on mountain tops, and river rafts, beneath rain-

soaked tent-flies—forever on the march extending the Controlled Area, and carrying the Flag of Australia into the demesnes of Stone Age men.

It is a story of civilization without exploitation. The welfare of the natives has been the paramount principle of Papuan progress, and as a result the Papuan has been preserved—not exterminated, exploited, degraded, and robbed of his birthright and hunting-ground like the unfortunate aborigines of civilized Australia.

But there's many a tale of Papua not yet written, and perhaps never will be written—the reminiscences of the civilian traders, miners, and plantation owners who are too busy making a living to write books, reports and diaries.

Men such as Hughie Beach of Daru and Percy Hinds of Kikori know the real inside story of Papua from the non-official angle. I wish that such men as these would emulate the government officials in putting their experiences on paper, to inform the Australian public of Papuan potentialities from the wealth-producer's point of view.

I dined with Cecil Frame, manager of the British New Guinea Trading Company, who, like many other civilians of Papua, holds strong opinions on official policy—and lack of policy in developing the country. These men have no parliamentary representation, and naturally they look at things from the commercial and trading angle, rather than from the point of view of Red Tape. If white settlement is to be extended and encouraged in the Land of the Fuzzy-tops, the Australian Government would need to create a seventh State with its own Parliament of local representatives of the business community.

The planters and traders of Papua are renowned for their hospitality, and I received many invitations by tele-radio to convalesce after my fever-quakes, as a guest in private homes.

So it was that I boarded the *Panawina* once again for a fifty-mile cruise along the coast to the plantations of Galley Reach, Redscar Bay, at the mouth of the Vanapa River, in the shadow of mighty Mount Victoria.

Skipper Teddy Mears was pleased to see his patient making a good recovery. Eight bells (midday) struck as we cast off the wharf and chugged placidly up the beautiful bay—prow pointed to the opening in the outer reefs that shelter the haven.

It was lunch-time.

"I've got something special for a convalescent," said Teddy. "I've been to the freezer and bought a spring chicken and Australian apples."

"That'll do me," I said. "I'm starving after five days on tapioca, milk and quinine."

Down we sat, and I ingurgitated the boiled chicken and a couple of apples—then rushed up on deck and regurgitated the lot.

Teddy was rovable. "Strike me bloody pink! I paid five bob for that chicken, and sixpence a piece for the apples."

I was speechless with chagrin and shame. . . .

Soon we were in the open ocean, where the "sardine fleet" of Moresby brave the elements in their frail outriggers, catching fish for the native village of Hanaubada. We passed many a mud scow battling among the reefs and sand-banks, manned by native crews at £1 per month, with sails or rickety engines likely to be capset by a guba at any time. East and west and up and down the long coast of Papua they go, year in and year out, some trading to the islands for trepang, pearl-shell or copra, from Rossel Island to Thursday Island, around the tide-scoured Gulf of Papua with its monsoons and razor-edged reefs.

When a yacht sails from Sydney to Newcastle—that's news. But up here in the tropics, crazy little schooners, ketches, and luggers go thousands of miles in all sorts of weather, and it's all in the day's work.

Teddy told me a true tale of a schooner saga. About thirty years ago the Christie brothers, returning from Mambare gold-field through China Straits, had all their dunnage on deck ready to disembark at Samarai, including a chamois bag full of gold—the fruit of fever and toil for a season.

Outside Samarai Harbour a guba smote the schooner, which lurched, and the chamois bag of gold slipped through the anchor hawse-pipe overboard. With great presence of mind, one of the Christie brothers immediately let go the anchor while the other brother furled the sails. Then a dinghy was sent ashore to Samarai to bring out Percy Lee and forty black divers.

Day after day the divers walked the sea-bed beneath the anchored schooner, but never a trace of the chamois bag could they find though they searched assiduously for a quarter of a mile radius, and examined every star-fish, sea-slug and weed on the sea-bed.

Percy, the Master Diver, was furious at the failure of his



underwater seadogs to scent the bag of gold, and he kept them at it with many a kick in the seat of honour for fourteen days.

Then he snorted disgustedly to the Christics: "I don't believe you lost a bag of gold, but if you did lose it, you didn't lose it here!"

Dismayed and disgusted the broken-hearted brothers reconciled themselves to the loss of their gold and hauled up the anchor to sail into port—and there on the fluke of the anchor was the chamois bag of gold! When it slithered through the hawse-pipe it had stuck on the hook and stayed there on the fluke while the anchor was dropped and raised again.

Some fluke!

At sundown we rounded the point into Redscar Bay. Night fell, darkness fell, and the rain fell as the *Panawina* bucked like a bronco for thirty minutes crossing the Vanapa Bar. But Teddy Mears steers by instinct; when the rain ceased, we were in the calm water of Galley Reach.

The stars gleamed and Teddy steered in the dim glim up-river till we dropped anchor at 7 p.m. I slept like a babe in a cot. Next morning at dawn the black boys rowed me a mile upstream in the dinghy to Kanosia wharf.

Uphill I climbed through a grove of green-boled rubber-trees to the home of Ray Corke, plantation manager, who welcomed me with a cup of tea—but, as usual in Papua, the house-boys had overturned the milk jug. Ten minutes later my host, Eddie Chester, arrived by motor-car, and off we went for a rough and rugged ride to Lolorua plantation, a mile away.

Mrs Chester greeted me: "We thought you would arrive last night, so we had a roast duck baked for you!"

"Well," I replied, "cold duck for breakfast will be welcome."

So I breakfasted on cold duck and fresh goat's milk—and kept it down.

Hooray!

Eddie Chester, born London 1894, came to Papua in 1914, and has been here ever since. In 1924 he was appointed manager of Anglo-Papuan Plantations Limited, which started growing rubber in the Vanapa valley in 1910. The planted area is 1250 acres, and the original trees, thirty years old, are still milking strong. There are 50,000 trees yielding rubber here, and another 50,000 coming on. One of the original directors of this company was Sir Henry Wickham, the man who smuggled the first

rubber plants out of Brazil. Five other rubber plantations in this neighbourhood are all doing well.

Lolorua employs 195 natives at ten shillings a month. In the district there are at least 70,000 acres of available rubber land, locked up because the Government will not sanction purchase of the land from the natives of the Kabadi tribe, who live on the plains near the river and seldom visit the rain forest upland, where the planters want to purchase. The planters say that the Kabadi natives would be benefited by opening up the highlands for rubber, as they would then have permanent work.

Purchase of land from the natives is a complicated procedure, as the land-buyer is not allowed to bribe or coerce the vendor in any way. The deal must be done through a Resident Magistrate, after the land has been surveyed. Often the native changes his mind, and the deal falls through. Then nobody else can apply for the hoodoo block.

If the deal is completed, the Government buys the land at from threepence to sixpence an acre, and the application goes before the Land Board. If they approve, the applicant is granted a ninety-nine years' lease. Sometimes it takes two years for a land deal to be completed from take off to touch down, and sometimes the native owner of the soil dies before the deal is done, then the rubber rigmarole has to start all over again. The planters say they approve of the government policy of protecting the natives, but that Papua will never make progress till white settlers also are protected.

Life at Lolorua was just one roast duck after another, as Mrs Chester is godmother to seventy-nine ducklings. Duck for breakfast, duck for lunch, and duck for dinner suited me perfectly; it restored my appetite and health to normality after my fever ordeal.

So I ducked around Lolorua plantation and soon forgot my malarial ordeal. I was farewelled with a roast duck plus tomatoes, fresh bread, and ice cream, fresh-made from goat's cream.

Back on the *Panawina* for a five-hour run to Port Moresby, and my Papuan prowler was at an end. On the morrow I departed by air for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. The story of my travels there will be told in *Somewhere in New Guinea*.

Five weeks in Papua. During that time I'd prowled from port to port, from river to river, and over the range, seeing all of it except the islands of the eastern end. Despite the fever, it was

one of the most interesting prowls of my life. Long will I retain the memory of meeting the fearless patrol officers, devoted to duty, and the sable hordes of feathered heathen they are taming.

Readers of this book will be able to judge for themselves whether Papua has great or small potentialities as a seventh State of the Australian Commonwealth. There is plenty of fertile land, and scope for intelligent development of tropical agriculture, while at the same time the well-being of the natives is preserved.

Sir Hubert Murray's long and benevolent reign is ended, and, under Australian rule for fifty years, the rights of the natives have been the paramount consideration of Papuan policy. These people have been gentled into contact with civilized ways, and they are eager now to work for the white man on plantations and mines and in domestic service. They look to the white man to raise their standard of living and civilization, by giving them opportunities to work for wages. They do not want to remain in their primitive Pigvilles, eating taro and bananas in the fashion of their forefathers. They welcome every new development under proper supervision without exploitation.

Australia can look to Papua for many tropical products now imported from foreign countries—rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, quinine, kapok, copra, could all be more extensively cultivated. Rice could be grown in the swamplands for native food, and industrial uses could be found in paper-making from the quick-growing grasses and nipa palms of the mighty river valleys and muddy deltas.

If flow oil is found, Papua will be transformed overnight. In any case there is vast mineral wealth in the coal deposits of the Purari.

Apart from that, the torrential rainfall and high mountain ranges provide innumerable sources of hydro-electrical power for factories, which would enable the natives to produce wealth and so provide the true means of raising their standard of civilization.

Some day, when the present war ends, there will be half a million Australian unemployed—demobilized from Army service and munition making.

Papua beckons to Australian statesmen as a field for genuine post-war reconstruction. Now is the time for intelligent planning in anticipation of the post-war problem.

The natives of Papua, under sane supervision, should be put to work immediately clearing thousands of acres of jungle, and

planting the areas with rubber-trees and other crops which take several years to mature. A ten-million-pound loan should be raised in Australia to finance this venture, and the improved land should be made available on easy purchase terms to demobilized soldiers and munition workers immediately the war ends—instead of gratuities and service pensions.

By this intelligent anticipation the Australian Government would solve two problems at one stroke: the development of Papua and the absorption of post-war unemployed. Statesmanship is needed instead of vote-angling bait like the Snowy River Scheme, which is intended to encourage the over-population of bloated Sydney.

Our northern frontier, the Land of the Fuzzy-tops, should become an asset instead of a liability.

So ends my Papuan prowl.



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